

## *Sex in Marriage*

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# Sex in Marriage

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REVISED AND EXPANDED

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*To*

Bayard Carter, M.D. and Robert A. Ross, M.D.  
of Duke University Medical School  
in recognition of their interest in and contribution to  
a modern program  
of education in preparation for marriage

439  
The courts of our country have wisely and generously sanctioned rational sex education. In the Stopes case (United States District Court) Federal Judge John M. Woolsey stated: "The book before me here has as its whole thesis the strengthening of the centripetal forces in marriage, and instead of being inhospitably received, it should, I think, be welcomed within our borders."

In the Dennett case (United States Circuit Court of Appeals) Federal Judge Augustus N. Hand found occasion to declare: "The old theory that information about sex matters should be left to chance has greatly changed. . . . It may reasonably be thought that accurate information, rather than mystery and curiosity, is better in the long run."

## Preface

The first edition of *Sex in Marriage* appeared twelve years ago. It is doubtful whether so short a period ever before witnessed such remarkable changes in the attitude of the American people toward any major social interest as during that time has occurred in recognition of the significance of sexual adjustment in marriage. Realization of the need of an informing book for those entering marriage has become almost universal. Meanwhile the value of such knowledge for individual and social welfare has been recognized by several liberalizing decisions by the courts. Equal in importance with this general acceptance of the usefulness of books and articles for the newly married is the remarkable advance in understanding sex in all its complexities which has taken place in science and which is proving of great value in the prevention of sexual maladjustments. The most important contribution to this increasing understanding of the significance of sex has come from the science of endocrinology. What we now know in that medical specialty has made it necessary to include wholesome sex life in the health program. Experiments and investigations are uncovering an aspect of sex which in the past has been only slightly understood. These three changes, now so

distinctly a part of modern American life, explain the need of a new edition of *Sex in Marriage*.

This third edition, like the original, attempts to be brief, helpful and scientifically trustworthy. It seeks to put in popular form useful information and also to stress the psychic attitude toward sex which is fundamental in achieving a satisfactory physical adjustment in marriage.

The book does not pretend to be a recipe for successful marriage but rather aims to act as a practical guide for young husbands and wives as they endeavor to make their own individual adjustments in marriage and as they seek to avoid problems that experience has proved are most likely to become troublesome.

Many scientists interested in various types of marriage problems have influenced this book. The authors, however, wish to recognize especially the contributions and suggestions of our friends, Robert L. Dickinson, M.D., Bayard Carter, M.D., Robert A. Ross, M.D., and E. C. Hamblen, M.D., the last three being members of the Duke University Medical Faculty and among the instructors of the medical course in the coöperative program offered by the University of North Carolina and Duke University for the training of specialists in the field of marriage and the family.

THE AUTHORS



## *Contents*

	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
CHAPTER	
I SEX AND HAPPINESS	13
II THE BACKGROUND	35
III BEFORE MARRIAGE	64
IV THE SEX EQUIPMENT	85
V THE BEGINNINGS OF MARRIAGE	108
VI THE LOVE ART OF THE HUSBAND	128
VII THE LOVE ART OF THE WIFE	145
VIII SOME COMMON SEX PROBLEMS OF MARRIAGE	158
IX PLANNED PARENTHOOD	183
X SEX AND LIFE	196
BOOKS SUGGESTED FOR ADDITIONAL READING	215
INDEX	217

on



marriage that we see the matrimonial voyage soon wrecked, or, what is nearly as pathetic, the fading of high hopes into the dull gray of monotonous association. To get the full yield of marital happiness, one must look to his past as well as try to make present adjustments. Indeed, these two interests become one, for successful adjustment is difficult if premarriage sex interests are ignored.

The first thing most of us discover as we dig into our sex history is that we have come to have a different attitude toward sex than toward anything else. It has captured our attention, but unless we have been most fortunate in our early training for life we have at least a tinge of shame, at times a mountain of guilt feeling, because of this interest. We are apt also to find that out of the past comes a sense of mystery, even of fear, whenever our minds turn toward sex. It is well for us to notice that this is not the result of anything that comes out of our sex nature in itself, but is the product of the social influences that have played upon us from early childhood and have given a peculiar shading to everything sexual. To see this is to recognize that our wrong feeling regarding sex may easily rob us of the frank, full, and rich satisfaction that the marriage union ought to furnish.

How far we often drift from wholesome sex comes out clearly in the fact that we are wont to call phys-

ical sex the animal passion. It is true that we share sex with the lower animals; it is equally true that nature has been liberal in the investment that it has made in our sex life, giving us even on the physical level intense pleasure in the normal functioning of sex. Nevertheless, the fact remains that we do not stigmatize hunger or sleep as animal traits, though these also we share with the animals. There is a vast difference between the way animals eat and the habits of the cultured person who observes present-day conventions. Some one has wisely said that this measures the gulf between animal behavior and human civilization. We are, however, nearer the animal in our hunger than we are in our sex.

On the human level when sex intercourse is experienced in its fullness there is a multitude of physical sensations, a wealth of psychic feeling and thinking, an intimacy of social contact utterly removed from the experience of the animal. It is true that sex can sink to the lowest depth, but only by throwing aside its human characteristics. Wholesome sex is not an animal passion, but a human craving that in the good things it brings into life has no rival except its own by-product, parental feeling. It is important that the newly married see this clearly. Any reluctance in meeting one's sex needs frankly, any sneaking protest built by subterranean attitudes that make intercourse a sop to the animal remnant still found in

human nature, means a bad start and for a time at least some loss of the happiness marriage has to offer. Nothing shows the strength of the genuine wholesomeness of sex more than the fact that, though multitudes every year begin marriage weighted down by a burden of wrong thought and training, through experience a considerable proportion of them are led into healthy attitudes and make their sex association the highest expression of intimacy and affection.

The word instinct appears often in discussions of sex. If there be any human instincts, sex is surely one of them. Nevertheless, the term sex instinct is misleading, if it makes any one suppose that among humans sex adjustment takes place in the automatic manner that it does among animals. The significance of the word instinct in connection with sex is the tribute it bears to the basic character of sex. Sex has been so fundamentally built into man and woman that it cannot be disregarded. But, however instinctively established, sex as it shows itself in any but the very earliest experiences has ceased to be an instinctive response, for it has been shaped by the personal experience of the individual. If this fact has added to the difficulties of human sex adjustment, it has at the same time enriched the experience. Sex cannot be mechanical, fortunately; if it were it would have less to give us. The cultivated man and woman have no reason for looking with envious eyes

upon the easier sex adjustment of the animal or even the simpler ones of the savage and the peasant type. Modern man and woman, healthy in body and in mind, can taste all the flavor of the cruder forms of physical sex and much besides. But to extract all the satisfaction sex has to offer means that sex intimacy must become an art; the closer it keeps to the instinct, the more meager its content and the greater the danger that the sex union will rapidly lose vigor and become monotonous and routine.

Whoever attempts to scrutinize his preparation for a happy sex union needs to bear in mind another fact that is often forgotten or even denied. By becoming civilized man has not been stripped of his sex vitality. Sex did not reach its greatest strength in the savage, nor has it diminished with man's increasing culture. Quite the contrary. There is evidence that the average adult in our time is more highly sexed than was the savage. There can be no question regarding the enlargement of the sex interest with man's social advance. Difficult as it is to compare periods so as to estimate justly the erotic element of the past as compared with the present, there can be no doubt that sex in our time has permeated every aspect of life, and that the social conditions which most of us met in our childhood and youth have stimulated our sex urge and relatively increased the meaning of sex for us as a means of achieving happiness. Modern life is

shot through and through with sex. Nowhere in human conduct do we find it absent. Our values have a sex element. This is not a mark of degeneration, but the inevitable spreading of sex into every department of human activity. This means that sex has not been left behind on the animal level of its origin as man has developed, but that it, too, has been refined and made more complicated as the life of man and woman has become more complex. Sex has too much native vigor ever to be completely artificial, but it has become more intricate, yielding its greatest pleasures only to those prepared to deal with it. Were this not true there would be no place for a book like this and no one would need to seek information regarding sex technique.

Sex does not merely concern the individual by himself; it has become one of the most important matters that concern people living together. Therefore, we find sex prominent in our morals, related to our health, tied to our religion, motivating business, appearing in every form of art, influencing our mental health, and supremely expressing itself in affection. We can escape from its omnipresence only by stepping outside of civilization. The amazing thing is that, though sex has so much to do with our personal and social happiness, we are loath to deal with it as we deal with other important things and to understand it in order to master it for our own good.

Few people are well prepared through early training to start the sex experience of marriage. As a consequence there is much blundering and unnecessary tension, emotional conflict and discontent. In contrast with this fact, to the truth of which many educators can testify, there never was a time when more honest effort was made by thoughtful young men and women to know how to meet the sex demands of marriage. These young people do not merely seek happiness in marriage; they endeavor to find out how to achieve it. For them this book is written. It aims to help those who desire wholesome sex experience. It hews close to the line. There are many things of great importance concerning man's sex life that do not have any place in this book. There are other phases of the sex problem that can only be briefly noted. Fascinating as some of these problems, particularly in the field of the abnormal, are to the student of human sexology, they have no place, it seems to the authors, in this book. There are important facts that the newly married want to know, that they may be able to cope with their new sex experience. There are other things which they need to know if they are to get from their sex life together all that it has to give. To discuss mental abnormality, disease, malformation, and other problems outside the usual personal experience of average men and women would be likely to lead to a mis-

understanding of the facts that concern their practical interests. Suggestions will be made as to how this material from biology, psychiatry, and medicine can be had for those who have special need of it.

Since sex has so large a place in human life and has so much to do with happiness, it seems strange that more effort has not been made to understand it, and to furnish married people with information that would help them to handle their sex problems wisely. The fact is that there is hardly any important concern of men and women about which there is such general ignorance as sex. This is not because information cannot be had, for there are many inexpensive and useful books. The trouble is that there is no realization by many people that they need specific knowledge regarding sex. Others do not know how to get what they would like to have, while still others, a very large group, refuse to face sex frankly and to deal with their ignorance as they would if it related to any other important matter. The result of this ignorance is that many marriages that ought to succeed fail. Not all of these ever find their way into the divorce court.

We have, of course, no way of measuring the unhappiness of those who find matrimony disappointing but who do not go to the courts with their troubles. Probably the great majority of people who remain married stumble through their sex difficulties

and arrive eventually at a tolerable adjustment. Many do not, however, get from sex the satisfaction that is their due, and they live and die never knowing their losses. Most of these unsatisfied people are well meaning and are eager to use to the full their opportunities. They would profit immensely from a practical knowledge of sex. These people are not lacking in intelligence, but they are lacking in an intelligent knowledge of sex. Their ignorance at times seems almost incredible.

One of the most serious sex maladjustments that has ever come to our attention resulted from the marriage of a brilliant college professor with a woman who also was college trained. During several years of married life they had neither had a single experience of successful coitus nor any inkling that their sex union was unsuccessful. It was not until eventually the wife developed a serious mental illness that the true situation came to light. Both of these highly trained people knew, so far as sex was concerned, less than many children who have been given sex instruction by their parents. Ignorance is always costly, but it is probably true that if people generally realized how much suffering comes into life because of lack of knowledge of sex, adequate instruction would be given to every young person contemplating marriage. The most impressive results of this ignorance are those that appear in physical trouble of one



kind or another. We are all too apt to forget the mental unrest, moral conflict, and general dissatisfaction with living that come from not knowing how to deal with sex.

By understanding the causes of this ignorance of sex we have a better insight into the obstacles that each of us faces when we try to meet our sex problems in a rational manner. In part, sex instruction is ignored because of a false confidence in the instinctive nature of sex. It is assumed that sex can take care of itself. It is found, however, from experience that even so basic a human appetite as that of hunger needs understanding and guidance. Out of this has come the wide attention that is now given to diet as a means of attaining health and efficiency.

The greatest cause of society's reticence regarding sex matters is fear. This shows itself in many forms. Some hesitate to handle sex openly, because they have never brought it under wholesome control themselves and cannot conceive of this being done by anybody else. Others, often reacting against their own early life, think that sex should be suppressed as much as is humanly possible, and they stupidly believe that they rid themselves of it by not giving it attention. Many are so impressed by the social dangers of selfishness in sex that they are always afraid that sex may escape from the control of con-

vention, and they feel the safest policy is to keep sex under cover as much as possible.

The immediate reason for the prevailing ignorance of sex is the unwillingness of parents to give their children instruction when questions are first asked regarding some sort of sex experience. Because of their own attitude toward sex, largely fear or shame, the parents cannot honestly meet the curiosity of their child. Once their policy of deceit and reticence starts, it is hard for them to break it. Sometimes conscience finally drives them to attempt to help their adolescent boy or girl, only to find that they are too late to win the child's confidence.

One of the dangers of this policy of withholding sex instruction from children is the possibility of a shock, from which innocence does not protect, since at any time sex may be accidentally forced upon the child by some older and possibly perverted person. We are not concerned in this book with sex pathology, but there are innumerable cases of adults normal in other respects who cannot erase from their emotional life the results of an early sex shock. This does not mean that they do not achieve sex adjustment, but only with effort and sometimes less perfectly than if they had been free from early contamination.

It is, of course, not true that information regarding sex is the only thing needful in achieving wholesome

sex life. Information cannot cure selfishness, or eliminate vicious or pathological trends from the neurotic. Nevertheless, information is most helpful, and for those who have married with true affection it is the only thing needed to make a wholesome sex career possible. Even those who have been fortunate in their bringing up and have been given sex instruction by their parents need new information when they enter upon marriage.

Allied to ignorance is a wrong attitude toward sex. It is common for people to become afraid that they cannot control sex and to attempt to remove it forever and completely from their lives. This explains the coming of asceticism, the morbid antagonism to pleasure, in the early history of the Christian Church. Some of the Christian leaders were ascetic. This was not altogether strange, for they had close contact with the vice of Rome in its most degenerate days and felt that sex could not be kept within bounds. Indeed, sex and evil were to them about the same thing. This attitude persisted and was passed on, until, for some of the readers of this book, it has formed a background that has warped the meaning of sex. If so, these early influences must be reckoned with, for they are sure to hamper wholesome sex relations.

When the idea of evil has been tied to sex, underlying difficulties are embedded in the emotional life

which mere information cannot greatly help. Thus it becomes necessary for the person entering marriage not only to know about sex, but to know as clearly as he can his inmost feelings regarding sex. Mere knowledge about sex technique, however valuable, cannot push aside wrong feelings implanted by the teaching of asceticism or by vicious influences and associates. There are exceptions, but almost always in nature pleasure is associated with things that are good and pain with what is harmful. Nowhere is this more forcefully true than in sex. If it were not so, the survival of the race would be endangered. Of course, this pleasurable nature of sex leads to problems of fairness, moderation, and self-control, but it nevertheless attests the fundamental soundness of sex activity.

The conflict between the teachings of asceticism and the impulses of nature that encourage the sex activity of the individual leads some people to have a double attitude toward sex. They both want it and fear it; they go toward it and they run away. This two-faced attitude the psychoanalysts call ambivalence. In their work with people they discover it frequently, for it is often found in those who cannot adjust themselves happily to life. Even though it may not take so extreme a form, its presence even in a mild degree hampers wholesome sex life, and the newly married must face this fact squarely, espe-

cially women, since they are more likely to be troubled by these conflicting attitudes. It is, therefore, not enough to think about marriage in the prudential way that is so often recommended; one must also think over one's personal sex attitudes which will affect marriage. Thinking, indeed, has to be done before marriage, but even more it must be done afterwards. The danger of saying this is that a certain type of person will be led to overinvestigation of himself and to the carrying on of what will be, in a degree at least, morbid searching. Here as elsewhere there is need of good sense.

Very few in our day and generation enter marriage without any blight from early happenings or wrong teaching. The danger of these can be easily exaggerated. There is an added risk at the time one marries, because just then emotions run strongly. One's motive for looking into the earlier experiences that influence sex feeling and thinking is not to pass judgment on oneself, but to understand what has happened that is likely to affect marriage. To develop a sense of blameworthiness or to feel penitent is distinctly unwholesome; to come to a franker understanding of oneself is good judgment and insurance against sex disaster.

Think how unfortunate those conscientious persons have been who have feared to let their minds dwell on sex in any way whatever, even though they were

about to pass through the gates of matrimony, because they thought it would be a sin to let the subject enter their thought. Again and again we have known of a bad beginning to sex adjustment, because one or both of the members of the matrimonial alliance recoiled from any thinking about the sex part of the approaching marriage. Most of these persons expected to be happy, but wanted their eyes blinded when they entered into marriage.

It is a good thing for the engaged, just before they are married, to have a frank talk regarding sex, but it is a question whether either the man or the woman can safely confess earlier history; whatever is said is so likely to be exaggerated, with a resulting misinterpretation of past experiences. Indeed, the reader cannot be too strongly cautioned not to attempt a personal inquisition of his own history for the purpose of passing blame. There are trends in courtship that encourage this, but they must be resisted.

One merely wishes to know one's past so one may be well equipped to deal with present opportunities. In spirit one is like the person who is asking for information about the road he must travel on his approaching automobile trip, that he may the more easily make his journey. Let it be remembered also that it is not what has happened but one's reaction to it that is significant. It has been found that even such a terrible happening as rape in the early life of

the female child may leave no serious emotional scar if her elders deal with it wisely. The candidate for marriage needs to know his past, merely because it will reveal his present sex characteristics.

Without health, happiness is difficult. There is constantly growing evidence that sex and health are intimately related. This is what one would naturally think. It would be strange indeed if so fundamental a function as sex represents to the physical body should have no important influence upon the well-being of the body as a whole. In view of this fact it would be remarkable that sex has until now received so little attention from the point of view of physical health, were it not that the social taboo against sex has been so strong.

In the past, such discussion as there has been of sex in relation to health has been almost entirely devoted to the problem of venereal disease, with a slighter attention to sexual excesses. Even in the medical schools we are told that there has been very little attention given to sex, although venereal disease has properly had a prominent place in the instruction.

The authors of this book have both been impressed by the fact that in taking their yearly physical examination, which has been searching in its thoroughness in regard to most of the functions of the body, until recently nothing was ever asked about sex, aside

from the routine question usually put to males, "Have you ever been infected with venereal disease?" When we have asked for information we felt it important to have, we gathered the impression that the patient as well as the examining doctor seldom brings up any specific question regarding sex. Yet no competent student of physiology would deny that sex has a major place among the influences that have to do with health, such as digestion, elimination, sleep and nervous vigor.

That this neglect of sex cannot continue if preventive medicine is to assume its full obligation is clear from recent investigations. We now know that there is a third function that the sex organs perform which must be added to reproduction and the pleasure of sex stimulation. Sex organs for both the man and the woman must be included in that list of the glands of the body which recent medical discovery has elevated to a foremost place in the physiological system. There is a definite interrelation between the sex glands and the other glands of internal secretion, or endocrine glands, all of which make important contributions to the health and personality by means of chemicals which they secrete into the blood. It has long been known that the gonads (testes in the man, ovaries in the woman) influenced body structure. Our conception of this influence has now been enlarged, and we are fast gaining insight into the



contribution of sex to the general functioning of the body.

There can be no gainsaying the fact that the body is prepared by its maturity to carry on sex activity. It is equally true that man has traveled too far from the animal level for him to treat sex only as a biological matter. There are reasons enough for the postponement or even in some cases for the abandonment of the thought of sex activity, but this does not change the fact that the body has through its normal growth arrived at the point where it is ready for sex experience. As a consequence there must be for many of the unmarried a period of struggle, either conscious or hidden from thought, which, like any inner conflict, registers itself in the nervous system. This means that a healthier life is offered the man or woman who with maturity can enter marriage. This is a matter that must be understood clearly. It is false to say that one who remains continent cannot be healthy; it is even untrue to say that physical sex brings stress to all who are not married. Fortunately, the need of sex activity is not awakened in some people until they have actually started sex experience, but the fact remains that the most wholesome situation, even from a physical viewpoint, is that which permits the young man and woman with the proper development of body to enter upon sex relations in marriage.

Fair-minded men and women, whatever their sex tension, cannot, whether married or unmarried, let their appetites trample the rights of others. There are, therefore, imperious motives for the faithful following by some of a policy of continence, but it must not be supposed that this program represents as desirable a condition for physical well-being as would come with a happy marriage. It does not represent living in accordance with nature's way of doing things, and for most normal adults it means strain and restlessness that antagonize, if ever so slightly, the vigor of living. The danger of the sedentary life in contrast with out-of-door activity is constantly emphasized by preventive medicine. Similarly, the physical and psychical disadvantages of an unsatisfied love life, including sex fellowship, are now being brought to the surface more and more forcefully by psychology and psychiatry, as greater knowledge is gained of human experience.

The ordeal of those who do not marry or whose marriage turns out to be a physical disappointment can be easily exaggerated. In many cases it is clearly the feeling of inferiority, especially in the woman who has had no chance to marry, that must be charged as the chief offender against content.

Unless we can be happy with other people we cannot be happy at all. Sex enters into the social experiences that mean so much to all of us. Indeed, it

is next to impossible for men and women in their most casual meetings not to react differently than if they were with some member of their own sex. This is, however, a small matter when compared with the other fact that normal sex experience requires an intimacy of two people. This is the first and fundamental coöperation. Thus wholesome sex compels that regard for the other person which is the taproot of all social attainments in our life together. Of all the values that come to us from this regard for others, which nature is determined shall, at one point at least, not be disregarded, the home is the chief. It brings, aside from the physical sex pleasures associated with it, satisfactions that reach deepest into human craving and thus stand the wear of time. Sex is drawn into a massive web of interest and refined into affection. This consolidation, through family experience, of physical sex and affection, especially when it is reinforced by parenthood, is the peak of social achievement.

It is fortunate for human happiness that sex is both tenacious and humanizing. There need be no apology for linking sex and happiness as we do. Sex has to function in happiness or in human coitus it shrivels. It cannot be a duty. It is possible for the female, without having pleasure, to go through a semblance of sex union, but for the male even this deception is impossible. Sex, to be sure, ranges over

great distances and mere pleasure seeking often sinks to low levels. It is not to be expected that all who seek the goal of happiness should arrive, but their failure must not blind us to their urge. We seek happiness because we are human. We enter marriage expecting happiness. We look to sex to increase our happiness. Mere expectations are not sufficient. Here as elsewhere in life success comes from knowledge and from character. Neither husband nor wife can get from their physical union all it has to give if they are ignorant of the conditions of wholesome marriage. Nor does the mere knowing of facts suffice, important as they may be. Character is also required, and without it mere physical sex pleasure proves illusive as a means of achieving a satisfying happiness.

## II

### *The Background*

The reader impressed with the importance of knowing his early sex life in order to make marriage adjustments easier and more satisfying may be asking himself at this point, How shall I begin? What in my childhood should I look for? A clear answer to these questions is the purpose of this chapter.

It is well at the outset to recognize that there may be considerable reluctance to make any genuine effort to look backward into one's own sex history. This, of course, shows the attitude toward sex that has come from the experiences of childhood and youth. If sex is so important a matter for newly-married persons and is influenced by the happenings before marriage, why should any one hesitate to go back into his past? To discourage any morbid reaction to this statement, we hasten to say that unwillingness to dig into the past does not necessarily mean that any very signifi-

cant thing has been lodged in the earlier life. It merely testifies to an unhealthy feeling regarding sex which has been socially created and needs to give way to a more wholesome feeling. This is what the psychoanalysts call "reëducation." This really means bringing up ideas that have a great deal of emotional content and putting them under the scrutiny of a more mature judgment so that they no longer have clinging to them the feeling that makes a wholesome sex attitude difficult.

In the plainest way possible we wish to impress the reader that he or she is not looking backward as a sort of penance in view of an approaching marriage to discover some terrible thing that has happened. Even if any serious thing has happened, which will rarely be true, it is to be dealt with in the same calm spirit as the most trivial occurrences and to be looked at rationally without a shred of guilt feeling, however strong one's regret, so that it will not become an obstacle to happiness.

It must also be recognized that reluctance to make an appraisal of one's premarriage sex experience does not mean that if the past is left alone it may be extinguished. If this were true it might be wisest not to dig up past history. In some form or other, attitudes of thought born of the past are bound to intrude themselves later in marriage, although the person who has been reluctant to deal with them openly may

not sense the fact that they are at the bottom of any special sex difficulty that arises in marriage. It is best before marriage or in the early days of matrimony to have a reckoning with one's past, so that the experiences of childhood and youth may help rather than hinder one's matrimonial adventure.

In getting acquainted with one's own sex history one has to ask definite questions:

1. What were my sex experiences in early childhood? It may be safely assumed that there was a starting place in sex interest and that this can be brought back to memory. It would be an extraordinary child that did not have any interest whatsoever in anything pertaining to sex. It is true that sometimes when parents are particularly eager to keep the child immature, sex awakening is delayed. This is not always the consequence that comes from such a parental policy, for at other times it stimulates a sense of mystery and the sex interest, even though hidden, becomes precocious, and in time attains unusual strength.

It is amazing how parents fool themselves and refuse to recognize the natural curiosity of their children in matters of sex. A mother of several children once insisted to us that her boys and girls, ranging from six to twelve, had never shown the slightest interest in anything pertaining to sex. At the time she told us this we knew she was mistaken,

because her boy of ten had just undressed a neighbor's girl of six, in order to satisfy his curiosity, but we merely tried to make her understand that it was her own willful blindness that had led her to suppose them uninterested in matters of sex. Not many years later this same mother traveled many miles to consult us with reference to a sex delinquency into which her oldest daughter had fallen, and which finally caused her dismissal from college.

Sex curiosity is practically universal in children, and it would be strange if it were not so. It is important, however, to recognize that this curiosity is nothing different from the usual questioning of the child in order to get the meaning of things that have attracted his attention. It comes to be different in a multitude of cases merely because it is treated differently. It is this that gives us our first clue in the approach to our personal sex history.

When and where did the first urgent curiosity about sex appear, and what happened? Was there any special suggestion or stimulation that brought sex consciousness? More important than the answers to those questions is, How was the curiosity handled by those who were asked for information? Did they reply by punishment, rebuke, postponement, evasion, or downright lying? Most important of all, however, is to discover what effect this parental behavior had upon one's own feeling and thinking. Did it give sex



a bad odor? Did it tie the idea of shame to everything sexual? Did it force separation between parent and child? Did it lead to excessive determination to discover the nature of this mysterious thing that produced so unexpected a reaction?

Many trivial expressions of curiosity and insignificant events related to sex have doubtless slipped from the memory and cannot be brought back to consciousness in this effort to trace from the beginning one's development of sex attitude. However, the more spectacular and therefore more important events can be recalled. Starting with the earliest memory it is well to run through one's personal history. This will usually be easier in the case of the man because, having been less coerced by social standards, his boyhood sex experiences were more clear. In the case of the woman there has usually been more social pressure during girlhood that led to a disguising of the sex features associated with her experiences. It is this difference that has made the sex life of the American woman more difficult in matrimony than that of the man. The mature person who honestly looks backward soon uncovers the sex element that was present in his childhood happenings after he had begun to realize that older people were frowning upon this special sort of curiosity.

There is need in this searching of childhood to gather up the wrong ideas that were instilled. It is

amazing how distorted sex becomes, especially to the woman who has either gone through the deceptions practiced upon children or has had information withheld. We would never have imagined that what we know from personal confessions could be true. For example, would any one suppose that a very thoughtful girl, brought up by conscientious parents, could have carried even into college the belief that pregnancy was a major operation which permitted the child to be born through the navel, or that a student of promise, on graduating from a university where she had taken considerable zoology, could know so little about reproduction among humans as to become pregnant without her knowledge? The first is not uncommon, and the latter experience is exactly what happened in a case recently brought to us.

We find that it is an extraordinarily prevalent idea, even among women who have had college training, that coitus is something painful to the woman. Such an idea is much more common among women than the sophisticated would ever suppose, and in spite of recent frankness it is true that a considerable number of young women even now pass through childhood and youth with the most mistaken ideas regarding sex. Some of these girls have read books of counsel written by those who are anxious to help the adolescent pass safely through her difficult years. Somehow this material has not had the simplicity or the direct-

ness needed to replace erroneous ideas. If men, through the greater freedom of boyhood, come to have a better idea of the marital status, they do not by any means escape error.

We have found among young men that one of the most common notions contrary to fact is the belief that a woman cannot conceive the first time she has intercourse. Another is the idea that unless the woman's sex contact brings her an orgasm she cannot become pregnant. These errors are particularly dangerous for those who through confidence in them enter into promiscuous relations. We have also been impressed by the illustrations of wrong thinking on the part of men regarding venereal disease, of which we have been told by medical specialists. These examples of the false notions of men are merely on a somewhat more mature level than those of women.

It is seldom that any child travels away from his early experience without being laden with a considerable number of false ideas about sex, which, if uncorrected, persist frequently even to the time of marriage. It is rare that there are no ideas at all. In addition to this is the pathetic loneliness the child experiences in many cases in which sex becomes a good deal of a puzzle. In some way the most natural questions have been awakened, but instead of receiving the expected explanation, the child is rebuked or even severely punished. At once he closes a certain

part of his life to the elders whose criticism he fears. This is more consequential than that his ideas are false, for even the conscientious parent who deliberately tries to help his child discovers that, do his best, he cannot prevent misinterpretations and misunderstandings by the child, so that the most carefully instructed boy or girl must be patiently dealt with and little by little led into perfect understanding. Those children who are shut away from adult sources of sex information are sometimes thrown into circumstances where perverted, neurotic feeling and thinking get started, and there is nothing to correct their false steps in sex development.

It is important to notice how different children are with reference to sex. Some have marked curiosity, some have little. Some require considerable explanation, some are satisfied with meagerness. Some turn away from sex quickly when they receive any degree of understanding, while others probe into the subject and think of it constantly. The temperament of the child, his environment, including his other interests, and particularly the isolated events which started sex consciousness, all have to do with his peculiar characteristics.

And so these are the important questions one has to ask regarding his early childhood experiences: When did I have my first awakening in sex? How was it treated? What effect did it have upon me?

What were the other important events in my sex development? How did they influence me? What wrong ideas did I get regarding sex as I grew up? What ideas have I now of whose truth I am uncertain? Was I given freedom to talk over my sex difficulties? If not, did I brood over sex by myself? Was my interest in sex little or much? Was it constant or intermittent? What finally seems to have been my sex characteristic?

2. What was the influence of the home upon my sex development? Usually our first impressions come from our family contact. Although not always true with reference to sex, this is probably the most usual occurrence. Even when the household does not supply the first impressions in the growing sex life, it does have, sooner or later, a very great influence. There is also much that comes out of the relationships of the various members of the family that concerns the developing sex life of the child. One of the first of these happenings is likely to be the reaction of the child when he discovers why babies come. This is an important matter because he generally has already had some idea, even though it be faint, regarding sex. Now he has to recognize that his parents have some sort of intimacy, something happens between them, which brings about the coming of a baby. If shame has already been applied to sex, there follows a considerable struggle because the parents seem de-

based to the child for having anything to do with sex, especially if their attitude toward it when the child has presented to them his curiosity has been one that has made the entire subject of sex seem unclean. A very common result of this shock that comes from getting the notion of the meaning of pregnancy is for the child to regard one of the parents as the victim of the other. Probably this is most often the mother, and resentment arises that the father should be so cruel to her. If the child by accident witnesses any intercourse between his parents this feeling of protest against the father may become unusually strong, since, misinterpreting what he sees, he is very likely to believe that the father is doing something hurtful against the will of the mother.

Another common result of new and more accurate information regarding pregnancy is for the child to feel jealousy against either the father or the mother, more commonly the former. He resents their sharing between them so intimate a secret from which he has been shut off. This might appear a rather trivial matter, because sooner or later the basis of this jealousy will have disappeared. Unfortunately, it is true, however, that jealousy is a habit. Once started, it is easy for it to continue. The material upon which it feeds changes, of course, with the passing of circumstances, but once the habit itself is established

it grows stronger and stronger if it be constantly exercised.

Thus the child who early becomes the victim of jealousy may carry his bad habit through life, and then marriage becomes for him a risky thing, since it affords so many opportunities for the stimulating of his fault. This is discussed in some detail in *Wholesome Marriage*. What we now need to realize is that jealousy often comes about through some sex element in the family association.

Another important sex happening which shows itself in family life is what we call fixation. Here the child ties himself emotionally too securely to one of his parents. There are innumerable cases in which the analysis of a personality difficulty has shown that this relationship had a sex significance for either the parent or the child, or even for both of them. The parent may flood the child with unrestrained tenderness, because of an unsatisfactory sex relationship in marriage. The child may bring his awakening interest in sex into association with his feeling of love for his father or his mother, and by his fixation start the foundation for an unnatural or a restrained sex career when once he marries.

It is patently unwise to forget to scrutinize home influences as they have operated on underlying sex attitudes. Here are some of the questions that may well be asked: When did I first associate the sex act

with the union of my parents? What was my reaction to my new knowledge? Was it consistent with my former feelings toward my father and my mother? Did I have in any degree at the start a feeling of jealousy because they had an intimacy I could not share? Did I feel that their intercourse was inconsistent with what they had taught me regarding sex? Did I develop a fixation on either my father or my mother? How long did this last and how strong was it? Does it still influence my feeling? If so, how is it likely to show itself in my contemplated marriage?

3. How did school influence my sex development? School life, especially public school life, brings together all sorts of children from every variety of home. There is nothing that depicts this diversity in the character of family life more than the sex behavior of different children. We are altogether too likely to consider a good home one that has comfort and security, and in which children receive the advantages of a large income. It has been found, however, that undernourished children come even from wealthy homes where there has been neglect in the feeding care of the child, or where ignorance of diet or discipline has prevented the child from receiving suitable food. It is still more true in regard to sex that families which would seem good in other respects must often be marked low in their efficiency



at this point. Out of this comes the fact that some of the worst children in their attitude toward sex come from what we call the better homes. Bad sex development is different from poor posture and undernourishment in that it does not affect merely the child who suffers. The precocious or vicious child has a peculiar desire to contaminate other children, especially those who seem most innocent. This, when brought to its lowest terms, seems to be due to a sense of inferiority which urges the child to use his opportunity to shock other children as a means of winning power. He becomes the psychic bully who, by forcing sex upon other children, is prominent and even feared. Thus it happens that the sex instructor in many schools is the most vicious and sexually precocious boy or girl in the group. Injured himself, he spoils others.

One of the commonest evidences of the unwholesome sex training of many children in America is the great amount of pornographic words and diagrams placed by boys, and even girls, on the walls of the schools, especially in the basement or out-houses which furnish the necessary secrecy. It is easy to exaggerate the significance of these diagrams for those who make them, since often for the individual concerned they are a primitive method of sublimating awakened sex curiosity. To other children they become stimulants of sex and even means of shocking.

They are the bane of teachers, especially those who are covering their own sex unrest by excessive prudery. Pornographic material may not be confined to the artistic efforts of the children themselves, for every little while a school is found where adults, without the knowledge of teachers or parents, have exploited sex interests of the children by selling them books or pictures of the most vicious sort.

Perhaps the greatest significance of this childish interest in pictures and descriptions of sex organs is its revelation of the meager training present-day education provides along lines of sex. Whatever else is true, the child's behavior is an indictment of our present stupid attempt to evade sex training for life. Probably the worst thing that happens at school is the rehearsal by the youngsters of their sex experiences. In one school to which one of the authors was asked to come to help straighten out a situation that had involved nearly all the children in the school, it was found that a very pretty and innocent-looking girl, who was soon shown to be a moron, an adopted child of unknown parentage, had spread the knowledge of vice throughout the school. It is hardly possible to believe that one child could have scattered so widely her bad influence and created an atmosphere loaded with suggestion. Such, however, was the fact, and with her removal the situation gradually cleared.

Once one of the authors was asked to give advice

because it had been found that the councillor of a summer camp had been encouraging vice among the boys in his charge. Working on this problem it was discovered that the councillor was himself a victim of a homosexual teacher in one of the prominent high schools of that state. A little investigation revealed that over a series of years this teacher had been leading promising boys into vice and had caused an enormous amount of sex difficulty. Since he was an able teacher of good repute, it was difficult to persuade the authorities that he was secretly a menace to the community.

It would be unfair to think of schools merely as places where vicious influences spring that discolor developing sex life, since some of the best ones give instruction, especially in biology, that brings help and insight to many children. Sex instruction badly done, with suggestions of self-consciousness in the teacher, does more harm than good, and it is this, perhaps, that retards the development of such courses. When they are rightly given by the appropriate person they become positive influences for good, and often supply information that the home ought to have given but did not.

Here are specific questions that need to be considered in any self-examination, to uncover one's sex attitude resulting from school experiences: Who were the children who influenced me in my sex thinking

and conduct? How much impression did I receive from them? Was I shocked during my early school life? If so, how lasting was this attitude? To what extent was I brought in contact with pornographic material, and did this have any harmful effects? What instruction or counsel did I receive from my teachers that influenced for good or evil my growing sex development?

4. What influences in the development of my sex attitudes came from the church or from religion? The church does not always directly concern itself with matters of sex. An increasing number of forward-looking pastors now provide instruction, especially for those about to be married. Many progressive churches now give careful thought to the constructive sex guidance of their young people, both by supervised recreational programs and by definite education and counseling.

Evangelists have sometimes made trouble by their ascetic suggestions. This is most likely to happen when they have had guilt feeling because of their own youthful sex difficulties. Often they react against early masturbation and an unwholesome overcompensation against all things sexual. In some instances recorded in pathological literature their emotionalism has resulted in morbid daydreaming by suggestible adolescents or even false accusation. Even the churches that do not often deal directly with sex do from

time to time, through their activities, influence the sex development of boys and girls. Sometimes Bible passages containing the frank expressions of early Hebrew literature are added to the pornographic collection of boys and less often of girls.

The most significant result, however, that has come to many of us from church influence has been the suggestion so often given by preachers that sex is in itself something low and earthly and must be looked upon as an enemy of spiritual attainment. Sometimes this is a conscious and morbid reaction of badly disorganized personalities, while at other times it is merely an unfortunate use of terminology that carries an impression quite contrary to the real feeling of the preacher.

The effect varies with temperament, some children getting no impression of any lasting quality, while others have sunk into their feelings in early years a suspicion or even a disgust of sex which leads to a vexing problem if marriage takes place. Just now it seems to be difficult for the church to deliver this ascetic attitude to young people, but in isolated, extremely conservative churches there is still enough of morbid Puritanism lingering to create a problem for a great many growing children and youths.

It would be most unfair to the churches to suppose that their idealism, their emphasis upon unselfishness

and right living, even when not directly applied to sex conduct, contributes nothing to the development of right attitudes toward marriage.

It would be unwise, therefore, to leave out of our reckoning the effect of early church teaching. Some of the questions that need answering are these: What did I get from Sunday school or from church that influenced my sex life? Were morbid and ascetic attitudes presented? If so, how did I react to them? Are they in any way still embedded in my outlook upon life? Was I led to feel that sex was something animal and necessarily opposed to spiritual values? Did I receive pertinent suggestions as to the meaning of marriage? Has this led to overstrain, with the risk that my eagerness to be conscientious may be overdone? Was I given teaching in the church that will make it harder or easier for me to establish a just and equitable fellowship with my mate in my family relationship?

5. How was I trained in modesty in early life and what are the consequences? This is an important question. There has been in the past such eagerness to bring children into accord with convention that there has often been an unfortunate oversteering of modesty. One cannot know many families without being acquainted in the concrete with the process by which this is accomplished. It occurs mostly in the case of the girl. Her attention is constantly called

to the most accidental and insignificant display of her underclothing or even, in extreme cases, to any abandonment of posture. Thus she is made early conscious of the need of observing something her elders are constantly telling her is modesty. How far this can go is illustrated by such a happening as the bleeding to death of a young mill employee, who refused to have a cut in her leg bound up by any of the male workers, and who died before the doctor could arrive.

Such extreme cases of modesty do not reveal the social harm that is commonly brought into the life of girls by the prudish attitude of parents. If, before marriage, sex and everything pertaining to it is made to seem a thing of shame that must be hidden at any cost, it is hopeless to expect a ceremony to wipe out unfavorable impressions and give the man or woman a fair opportunity to live a genuine and vigorous sex life in marriage.

We doubt if anything enters the life of the young girl that is more insidious in its basic trend toward morbid sex than the constant nagging of some mothers, and even fathers, when their girl abandons herself to play in the same way as would a boy. So long as this difference is observed in the early training of boys and girls, we must expect some American women to find difficulty in making reasonable sex adjustments in marriage.

This policy that has so long prevailed with reference to the stressing of modesty in the early life of the girl cannot be defended by saying that it is a means of protecting her virtue. Right training does not require the building of morbid attitudes for the purpose of moral security. Wholesome training refrains from drawing attention to things remotely connected with sex and avoids making children self-conscious.

To satisfy the normal curiosity of boys and girls about each other's body structure, nothing works so satisfactorily as to let them see each other as naturally without clothes as with them, so that from infancy up to the approach of puberty they are accustomed to the nakedness of others, during family bathing and dressing hours. This does not attract attention to sex as some might suppose, but instead leads to comparative indifference and a dismissal of the curiosity that is so compelling in children for whom sex has been made a mystery. The increasing practice of letting little boys and girls play together in the sunlight entirely naked, that they may get the full benefit of the ultra-violet rays, is most beneficial and should teach backward parents the absurdity of their former policy. How strong curiosity can be in little children merely because of the concealment and mystery that keep from them knowledge of the sex construction of the opposite type can be



appreciated by any adult who has once passed through the experience. If this drive of curiosity, the most natural thing in the world, is tied to self-blame for having such interests, the source of double feeling toward sex is established, which is certain to make marriage intimacy somewhat of a struggle.

It is not at all difficult in practice to allow great freedom within the family and at the same time guard the child against exposure in association with others that will lead to criticism. It is easy to explain that one of the things the family gives us is a freedom we are not supposed to have elsewhere. As a matter of fact, the very little child learns this by observing things done and talked about within the family circle that are not carried to outside contacts.

Perhaps the most harmful effect that comes from what has been the conventional attitude regarding modesty is the feeling of many women that they are expected to play the difficult rôle of both enjoying sex and at the same time abstaining from the abandonment that the male takes for granted. Some men also have come up out of their early experiences with the idea that the right sort of woman thinks of sex as a more or less necessary evil and has a great modesty which he has to break down to have sex intercourse with her at all. A few men even today cling to the belief that lack of this unwholesome attitude in a woman is evidence of her early laxity

and on this ground become suspicious of their wives' faithfulness.

In looking backward into past sex experience, one must not neglect this matter of modesty. What was the family attitude toward modesty? Did it lead to self-consciousness on my part? If at any time I encountered shock because of some accidental exposure, was I also blamed? Did I continue into youth this early feeling about modesty? Have I any deep-seated prudish feeling that will make it difficult for me to be frank and to abandon myself in sex intimacy?

6. In passing through youth, what happened to me of significance to my sex development? Youth is for most young people a considerable strain, and in this sex usually plays a prominent part. It is wrong to think of adolescence as difficult merely on account of sex development, for it is a complicated experience; the beginning of independence and self-direction necessarily adds difficulties to adjustment. It is also a time teeming with physical disturbances due to the rapidly changing structure of the body. But deepest of all is the fundamental fact that social maturity and sex maturity do not keep step with each other, but the latter gets ahead of the former. The earlier the marriage, the less the stress; the more the marriage is delayed, the greater the distance between what the body is ready to have and what it is per-

mitted. The problem is even more difficult, for there is evidence that what the body seems structurally prepared for, it had better not have, if the effect of early indulgence is considered from its total effect upon the growing personality. This is strikingly true of the girl if pregnancy is included. Children of fourteen have become mothers, but the experience decidedly antagonizes their physical health. Aside, therefore, from the social postponement of marriage, there is a divergence in nature itself which permits the body to be ready to reproduce before the exercise of this function is for its good.

In youth there are four common ways by which young men and women meet their problems. One is retreat. This means that they do their utmost to keep away from everything that has to do with sex, and go so far in countless instances as to build up a guilt feeling with reference to their natural interest in sex, which is so strong as to keep them from anything with a sexual flavor.

A second method of adjustment may be properly called play. Here sex is used as a means of pleasurable contact without going so far as to be a serious form of sex contact. Here, at present, ranks much of the petting which in its frank expression troubles and frightens the elders who misinterpret its meaning. A third attempt is that of sublimation, forcing sex energy to pass into other interests. Sometimes the

second and third are joined together. At other times, religion, aesthetics, or athletics are made to take the place of sex, and an overwhelming zest in something else throws sex more or less under cover. Thus energy that would flow out in sexual experience is switched over into a channel that the conscious mind approves. Fourth, there always have been, as there now are, a considerable number of young men and women, always more men than women, who enter during youth into the complete sex act.

It is not difficult to analyze past experiences. One must keep in mind, however, that it is not what has happened, but what it has done to the feeling and thought about sex, that is chiefly important for the person who has entered or soon expects to enter matrimony. It is seldom that all the sex experiences have consistently fallen into any one of the four groups mentioned. In any case, whatever has been the history of one's youth, it needs to be faced clearly, in as objective a manner as one ever can think of events that have fallen within one's own personal experience.

7. Masturbation. There is, perhaps, nothing connected with sex that has been so misunderstood or that has caused so much unnecessary worry and guilt feeling as masturbation. It is startling to find a graduate student who has studied both psychology and sociology in one of our best universities still

asking whether masturbation carried on in early years had brought about a tendency toward insanity. The first thing to know about masturbation is that no authority anywhere in the world today believes that masturbation causes insanity.

Masturbation is a habit, but it has such different significance in childhood, youth, and maturity that it is unfortunate that the same term has to be used. In childhood it is a spontaneous habit which is nothing more than play. It does not have related to it any erotic thinking, at least at first, and is in the beginning not unlike the child's playing with his fingers or his toes. The child has merely discovered a part of the body that brings him mildly pleasant sensations when he handles it.

About the time of puberty, masturbation comes to have an erotic character that makes it different from the earlier play of the child. The rapid growth of the reproductive system in the adolescent years adds sex values of a more mature type to the child's thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. The desire to masturbate in this period is but one among many indications of the individual's progress toward adult sex development.

Whether the adolescent acts upon the urge to get relief of physiological tension by self-manipulation may depend largely on his reaction to earlier expressions of parental disapproval of the correspond-

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ing form of childish self-play. If the parent held to the old belief that masturbation would undermine the health and injure the mind, this mistaken notion was liable to result in his or her imparting to the child a state of panic in regard to this common biological urge.

Fear makes it harder for a person to form objective judgments and act upon them. The frightened child tends to become the adolescent who does not readily outgrow the halfway stage of concentration on self-stimulation and self-gratification. This adolescent who is overconcerned about his or her sex impulses may become an habitual masturbator, clinging to the practice instead of making successful efforts to form satisfying friendships with members of the opposite sex, or may turn aside from everything that is recognized as sexual. Either course may be a lasting handicap, if it prevents marriage or brings the young man or woman to marriage with an aversion to acknowledged heterosexual activity.

One who is not worried about masturbation learns to keep it in its place, as an occasional safety-valve for the release of troublesome sex tension. The adolescent who is making substantial progress toward mature ways of meeting life discovers that sexually stimulating happenings and ideas are an integral part of living, and can be variously welcomed, ignored,

or sublimated from time to time, in accord with the developing philosophy of the person.

The adolescent who fails to make reasonable use of the opportunities within reach for enjoying the friendly companionship he or she wants, because it seems easier to fall back for solace on the self, is losing one of the helpful disciplines in living, which cannot readily be made up for in later years. When this trait persists into adult life, the person may be unnecessarily handicapped, both in and out of marriage.

The deeply self-centered adult does not always remain single, but may create a difficult marriage adjustment. As long as the preoccupation with the self continues in adult life to take the form of concentration on masturbation, whether as a preferred practice or as a subject for remorse or fear, the prospects for good sex adjustment are unfavorable.

In contrast with the mutually satisfying coitus of the adult, masturbation is infantile in character. It is depressing, whereas wholesome intercourse is refreshing and relaxing; it leads to self-depreciation, while satisfactory coitus increases one's self-confidence.

Although no one can speak with statistical certainty, it is believed by all students that masturbation is a habit extremely common among boys, so common as to make some say that every boy has been



at some time addicted to it. This statement represents, of course, nothing but personal opinion, and many close to the lives of boys consider it an exaggeration. In the case of girls, the question is a little more difficult to answer. This is because there are such a number of ways in which the girl may produce sex sensation. In many cases it is hard to be sure that what she does has a sex significance. The probability is that masturbation is much more common among girls than has been in the past supposed, but not so common as it is among boys. Possibly, also, it does not have such consequences in creating shame, because there is not the same frank realization that what is being done has to do with sex. We have known of young girls who have carried on practices together that sophisticated persons would recognize as being sexual in character, but this was not understood by the persons themselves until a later time. The wide spread of sex sensation in the female and the lack of sex knowledge in many girls make possible this unrecognized sex conduct which rarely happens in boys.

It is well for those who seek wholesome sex adjustment in marriage not to flinch from self-examination with reference to masturbation in early childhood and through puberty. If the habit has become so confirmed as to have possession of the person it must be frankly recognized that it may make mar-



riage disappointing. There is plenty of evidence, for instance, that some of the women who are frigid in normal intercourse are confirmed masturbators. It is also true that some men so much prefer masturbation to normal coitus that they find marriage dissatisfying. It is probable also that some who have masturbated a great deal over a long period of time tend to reach the sex orgasm too quickly to give the partner in the act a reasonable time to come to the climax. Of course this is more common among men, and it is a distressing fact because, once the man has discharged, he is usually unable to continue the act long enough to bring his wife satisfaction. Thus, as we shall see at a later time, she is constantly stimulated but never satisfied, and intercourse becomes for her a torture against which she deliberately sets herself, so that she may resist even the stimulation that starts her toward the climax which she never or seldom reaches.

It is of the greatest importance, in looking back into one's early life, that masturbation, if it has been practiced, should be treated with the same objective good sense as it would be by any well-informed person in dealing with some other person's experience rather than his own.

### III

## *Before Marriage*

We are not destitute of books that give useful advice regarding courtship. Whatever special interest a young person may have in mind related to the general question of courtship, he or she can find a serious discussion of some of the important angles to be considered. Most of the practical books on marriage have at least a chapter on courtship; some have several, taking up the various stages of courting and the different factors involved, such as personality, family background, location and convention, as they operate in the initial stages of getting acquainted, making friends, dating and courting, choosing the mate, managing the engagement period, and preparing for marriage.

Most young people concerned with courtship would profit by reading one or more general dis-

cussions of the subject, and then studying in some detail those special topics that have most value for them personally, because of their individual circumstances, whether budgeting, heredity, or what not.

In keeping with the specialized interest of this volume, this chapter will not be a general discussion of courtship, but will limit itself to courtship as it is related to sex. The other aspects of courtship are discussed in several of our other books with little attention to their sex aspect. Now we would reverse this and treat sex with only incidental reference to the other problems of courtship and engagement.

The young man or woman who has just entered courtship or expects soon to do so needs first of all to recognize that the experience today, even if it does not present new problems, makes former ones more perplexing and more difficult. This is due to the breaking down of some of our conventions, which in the past kept rather definite control of courtship for those who desired to maintain good social standing. This fading away of social control is largely because the time has come when young men and women feel equal to self-responsibility and therefore refuse to accept the restraint once laid on them. This change is not evidence of youth's recklessness or looseness of moral standards, but it is necessarily something that adds to the dangers of courtship, since it puts upon personal initiative and judgment responsibilities

that in the past were escaped by merely following the general rule.

In plain English, the young man and woman today are largely free to do as they please in their courtship, but they must eventually accept the consequences of their choice. This is a period of self-responsibility, freedom, and frankness, but it is not true, as some seem to suppose, that courtship has lost part of its former purpose, and that there is no need of restraint so that it does not matter so much as it used to what happens in the intimate fellowship of the young man and woman who see in each other a possible life partner.

It is of course about sex that the important happenings of courtship center. Before we consider in some detail the most important of these problems, it is necessary to recognize the double meaning of courtship, since both of its aspects have to do with sex. It is both an opportunity for the man and the woman to develop affection and the means by which each may test the character of the other.

Courtship is a period when two individuals, a male and a female, are drawn together. In this attraction, which, if it works out successfully, is to weld the two together for their earthly life, sex plays, and should play, a prominent part. In some countries this is not true, but marriage is either brought about by parents without consulting the will of the young

people, or it is largely influenced by prudential and financial motives. Marriages under these circumstances also become successful, but this would not happen if the entire life of the young people were not different from ours. In our own case there cannot be a normal love courtship in which physical passion has no play.

It follows that there are two dangers which every sensible young man and woman need to realize. One, and this is a very common temptation in courtship, is to allow physical attraction to dominate completely, so that each is seeking in the other nothing more than physical satisfaction. Marriages that have at first nothing but a physical basis sometimes succeed, but without question such a marriage is extremely risky. Physical passion by itself without any common interest or companionship is apt to fade away, and rather quickly. This explains many divorces of persons who, being violently attracted by each other, marry on very short acquaintance, but within a year or two with intense bitterness seek separation. It is just not human to live day after day with a man or woman who has nothing to offer except sex.

On the other hand, no one would have the courage to underwrite the happiness of two persons who were fond of each other, but who throughout courtship felt no sex attraction. It is true that after marriage sex comradeship sometimes starts and vigorously de-

velops, as it frequently does in countries where there is no romantic love between the young people whose marriages are arranged by the parents, but it is an extremely risky undertaking for any male and female to marry for motives that do not include a desire for physical contact. Recently two extremely passionate, cultured, and conscientious individuals have had to confess after several years of attempted adjustment that their marriage is a failure and divorce must be had. In this case the marriage was made an obligation by a dying relative, who thought the union desirable. Because this interference with their comradeship blocked the natural physical interest of each in the other and made both feel that marriage was a duty, sex fellowship became difficult, although each was conscious of strong passion.

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[The absence of sex from courtship is probably a more dangerous symptom than extreme passion, but the reader, especially the young woman, must accept the caution that it is easy to disguise sex interest and to suppose that it is not present when it really is.] It is by no means true that passion always appears in clear form in courtship. The body of the normal young man and woman is so ready for sex awakening and so easily charged through and through with sex feeling, once attraction starts, that it is impossible for fellowship to go on, day after day, week after week, without sex energy arising to a new level.

Normal as this is, it is for some a surprising and even at times a perplexing discovery.

This is illustrated by the following extreme incident. A young professional woman brought up in a very thoughtful home and given a college education, in the midst of a courtship about which she was beginning to be somewhat doubtful went so far from her accustomed behavior one evening as to sit upon the lap of the man in whom she was interested. As a consequence of this she soon had, to her astonishment, sensations which she had not previously experienced. Because this happened, she supposed she was obligated to marry the man, and felt absolutely committed to an engagement which she would otherwise have broken. Finally, she married him, although she already knew she did not love him. As she now thoroughly understands, she was driven into her marriage by a false sense of obligation in utter ignorance of sex. Had she been acquainted with the fact that what happened to her was a perfectly natural thing under the circumstances and that its significance was merely that she had put herself in a position where she had unusual sex stimulation, which in the future she could easily have avoided, her marriage would not have occurred.

Those who enter courtship with their eyes open understand the need of protecting themselves against the amount of sex stimulation which their association

can very easily stir up. It is commonly supposed that this safeguarding is entirely the business of the man, but this is an error, based upon the old idea that it is only the man who finds self-control difficult and that the woman has a lesser endowment of sex. In actual experience it is nearly as often the woman as the man who is to blame for starting the development of sex that leads to strain and even regret. She may, however, make the association difficult merely because of her ignorance of the ways in which sex stimulation starts. It is only fair to realize that the woman is more likely than the man to suffer socially from giving way to passion, since she must run the risk of possible pregnancy. She, therefore, has prudential motives for keeping sex within bounds that make her at times appear indifferent to the urge of which the man has become so conscious. It is not a masculine obligation to protect courtship from becoming enslaved by physical passion; it is a mutual duty that falls upon both the lovers.

Unfortunately, on account of the differences of background, there is no absolute standard of conduct that can be insisted upon in courtship. The degree of expression of physical passion that will be shocking to one individual will be accepted as a matter of course by another and actually have less erotic stimulation for the second than the first. It is just such differences that make courtship difficult and place



upon good judgment rather than rules the decision as to what is safe and good and what is dangerous.

Those who face the concrete problem of courtship adjustment must also remember that it is almost inevitable that the courtship as it proceeds should grow toward greater intimacy. The fellowship cannot remain where it starts if it is to be an advance toward matrimony. As intimacy increases along other lines it carries with it a more open betrayal of sex interest. It is better to understand this than to become, through ignorance, the victim of passion. It is on account of this increase of physical sex in normal courtship that society frowns upon long engagements. The constant association and postponement of marriage put upon the couple an increased sex tension constantly stimulated by their association, while at the same time there is denial of the legitimate fellowship that belongs to marriage. This accounts for the emotional disturbances that are so frequently associated with a long, intimate courtship.

Some who do not sense the fact that courtship must necessarily include an element of sex make the error of the young professional woman in thinking that just as soon as they become conscious that sex has been awakened by the association they are, because of this appearance of physical passion, bound in honor to go on into marriage. This is most unwise, because if, for any reason whatever, doubt enters, it

is the purpose of both courtship and the engagement to allow a retreat before the social commitment has been carried to its culmination.

The mere feeling of sex attraction during the courtship offers no reason whatever for forcing oneself to marry if it has become clear that there has been a change in feeling on the part of either person or that the marriage is unwise. Stripped of sentiment, the situation merely is that through contact the young couple have acted upon one another in such a way as to bring to consciousness their sex desire. This, once it starts, can easily be transferred from the individual who originally stimulated its appearance to some one more qualified to give it permanent satisfaction in a marriage of mutual respect and affection. Sex awakening is no guarantee that two young people are especially adapted to give each other happiness. It is merely that, as members of opposite sexes, their being together in rather constant association has given nature its chance to bring to the surface impulses upon which it depends for the perpetuation of the race. Whether or not they ought to marry still remains a matter for calm judgment, not at all coerced by any feeling that they have become committed to each other because they are conscious that they have been sexually attracted.

The overconscientious reader who does not feel in any peculiar and new way what she imagines to be

sex craving must not assume that a promising fellowship should be broken because it is destitute of necessary physical attraction. *should be clearly understood* If one hungers for the presence of the other, loves to see his face and even most accidentally to touch his hand or feel the pressure of shoulder or arm as they walk along together, there is undoubtedly a physical attraction which, given favorable opportunity with increasing association and growing respect, will flame into consciousness and show itself genuine sex passion.

There is another thing about courtship that has to be recognized, besides the fact that the association leads to attraction. Courtship is also an experimenting with what, if it works out, will be a life fellowship. From this point of view courtship is a prelude to marriage and a period of discovery. It offers opportunity for the testing of the young man and woman now beginning to think seriously of marriage. Each seeks to be with the other, not only because this brings pleasure, but also on account of the opportunity it offers for getting better acquainted. In this process of becoming good friends there is another element than that ordinarily found in such comradeship. This additional feature is sex.

It is, of course, clearly not possible to become so well acquainted with a person's sex characteristics as with most of the other aspects of the personality, as an attempt to do this would rush the courtship into

the complete intimacy of marriage and smother fellowship by the predominance of the physical. During this relationship preliminary to marriage there is something more important for the young people to discover than anything they can get from taking prematurely the final gift of marriage, and that is their fundamental sex attitude. Thus courtship is acid-testing in bringing out the quality of the love that is assumed to include but also to master physical passion. Since courtship is a prelude to marriage, when the friendship advances to its ultimate matrimonial goal, it follows that whatever happened during courtship becomes a part of the memory of both the young man and young woman and ever afterward helps or hinders marriage happiness. In other words, there will not be after marriage any distinction whatever in the thinking of either man or woman between the revelations of character that were made before and after marriage, as one looks back to the earlier period of courtship. Here lies sex danger, because what may be accepted under the stress of passion by one or the other of the prospective partners may in the calmer aftermath receive the severest inner protest and be forever, even though hidden from expression, a source of deep-seated resentment.

No one can be familiar with the adjustment problems of men and women in marriage without knowing the truth of this. Again and again what was ac-

it leads to better men in marriage  
Some people say due to this fact that love marriage is not a successful one

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Due to this fact love marriage becomes a successful one in marriage.

cepted in courtship with feeble protest, when it is finally reckoned in the quieter days of marriage as the outcoming of selfishness or feeble affection, brings forth suspicion and bitter feeling. Since it is most often the man who is guilty of letting passion run away with the fellowship of courtship, it is upon him sooner or later that the blame is likely to fall, even when the unbiased observer acquainted with the facts of human sex behavior would regard the woman as the first cause of trouble—although she may have exploded the dynamite that shattered his self-control in all innocence.

It follows that it is good sense and in accord with the impulse of genuine affection for both the man and woman during courtship to ask from time to time, Just what effect will this particular conduct have upon us in our later union when in our calm moments we look back upon it? Only he or she destitute of genuine affection could ever be indifferent to the final consequences of whatever may have happened in courtship. Indeed this difference between those who are under the mastery of the present and those who have a longer look ahead is especially revealing of character, and often the discovery of unexpected weakness on the part of one who fails to meet the tests of courtship has led the other person to end the fellowship.

It would be wrong to suppose that these problems

that bring out the inner life are exclusively related to sex, because this is by no means true. On the other hand, it is not strange that sex should frequently and without warning appear in some form or other to test character.

When a sex problem does arise it is nearly always far-reaching in its importance. Young people who seek assistance in making the best use of courtship have a right to ask for something more in the way of guidance than mere warning. It is necessary, therefore, that we consider the concrete sex problems of courtship in order to have a better understanding of their nature.

Courtship is bound to stimulate sex, even though the meaning of physical appeal may not be clear to the consciousness of the unsophisticated woman. It stands to reason that there cannot be courtship for any length of time without an awakening to greater vigor of the sex impulses always strong in the normal individual. Indeed a failure to bring about this peculiar interest in the other person is, as has already been said, sufficient reason for supposing that the courtship should come to an end. In so far as courtship in animal life foreshows love-making between humans, its purpose is clearly that of sex stimulation. The development of sex attraction is one of the purposes of courtship.

Discussions of courtship sometimes give the im-

pression that love is a sort of magic that, independent of the characteristics of the individual, makes all men and women come under an outside force that has control over them. This, of course, sounds, when one stops to think, ridiculous. Being in love does not change any person. He loves as he is, revealing his inmost character as he is flooded with the strong emotion that we think of as romantic love. Men in love do not all act the same; women in love do not. There is, therefore, no standard pattern which can be drawn up as the only appropriate way of carrying on courtship.

On account of the social differences that still exist between men and women, and more especially on account of the early training each receives, which is even in these advanced days considerably different for boys than for girls, there is in many cases some distinction between the ways men and women feel in love. It is useful to recognize this, provided that it is not taken too seriously in the impression that there is a distinct rôle the man must play, and quite another that belongs to the woman.

We are of course concerned with these differences between men and women that show rather frequently in courtship only as they relate to the sex impulse. Perhaps the word that best describes a common reaction of men in courtship is idealizing. The man lifts the woman up onto a pinnacle. She stands apart from



Examine it grammatically, it is  
all right.

78 SEX IN MARRIAGE

the common order. She is altogether desirable. There is no one else like her. And this is all true so far as it has to do with the meaning she has for him. Now, however, there must sooner or later enter into this idealizing the fact of sex. He not only knows that this woman like himself has sex impulse, but he also realizes that it is his desire that she should. At the same time, if sex in women previously has been associated with things coarse, if it has smacked in his experience of the purely animal attitude, then indeed there is discord in this idealizing process. Either he pushes out of consciousness so far as he can all evidence of her sex passion, if he comes to recognize its expression in any form whatsoever, or he finds himself thinking irresistibly of her sex appeal, although it seems to bring her down to common clay.

He, on the other hand, who has kept his respect for all women and has made sex a constituent of affection as he has thought previously about marriage and love, feels no conflict as he becomes conscious that sex is more and more entering into his intimacy with the woman whom he loves and expects to marry. It is what he expected to have happen and he has no struggle to maintain his devotion since sex to him has never been so blighted as to make it seem debasing in any woman. It is possible for this second individual, without feeling any treason against love, to think clearly and frankly about sex and at the proper



time talk it over with his beloved without feeling that the elevation of their fellowship has been brought down to earthly things.

In these differences between men we see coming to fruit such early conditions of childhood and experiences of youth as have already been discussed in former chapters. However, the man who finds the thought of sex bringing a foreign and debasing element into his love must resist the feeling that the courtship has been blighted, and instead recognize that his reaction is the unfortunate effect of earlier experience, making clear to himself that whatever his feeling may be, the fact is that sex is a legitimate and even necessary element in courtship, not only for the man but also for the woman.

There is no one attitude of women in courtship that is shared by all women. It is, however, true that women, as a group, under the spell of love have in common an experience that can be described so as to be helpful in the understanding of courtship if only it is not overemphasized. Many young women from about the time of puberty daydream a great deal regarding the kind of man they are to marry, their future home, and even the children they expect to have. In this frequent turning to fancy the girl comes to feel her need of complete commitment to some one whom she can love—in simple words, she longs for some one whom she can possess completely and to

whom she will be everything he needs. Apparently she is more likely to dwell upon this personal relationship than upon anything that is clearly sexual, whereas the boy, in so far as his imagination turns toward the future, has definite thought of sex. In his daydreaming he thinks of sex more than he does of comradeship or parenthood, while the girl reverses the process and thinks of the man ordinarily with only a faint sense of sex. *very good lines clear underst*

As the boy whose imagination or practices have led him to have a low idea of sex meets difficulty when the romance of love starts, so the girl with a different training has to meet the same basic problem as the boy, although not in the same way. As she turns her longing for man in general to the definite person with whom she starts courtship, she must sooner or later reckon with sex as it becomes conscious, due to the awakening of impulses that have been deeply implanted in her body. It may disturb her to find that she has sex needs, as well as a longing for the fusing of selves.

She usually finds herself struggling against the intrusion of sex and thinks of it as something quite beneath her affection. "Of course," she admits to herself, "it eventually has a proper place in marriage and represents a sort of sacrifice the woman has to make for the more animal-like man." The mischief such thinking can do in marring courtship one could hardly

imagine. Here, for instance, is the illustration of a woman so shocked by the passionate kiss of the man to whom she was engaged that she expressed her disgust and threatened to break the engagement. Unfortunately for the happiness of the two she did not do this, but the man, amazed at her exaggerated reaction to what he had not even been conscious of himself, never quite forgave her. When he discovered after marriage that she was more passionate than he, he added to his resentment a feeling that she was not honest. Children were born and year after year the domestic life went on, but he never ceased to brood over the rebuke which cut him so deeply. He cared less and less for sex, as she cared more and more.

In time this home situation became a chief cause of a nervous breakdown which required his being placed in a sanitarium. The day he received his freedom he came a long distance to talk over with us his domestic problem. He had reached the philosophic stage, making a decision which, as time proved, saved him from a recurrent attack. "She has been," he said, "a miserable wife. She read into a natural and even accidental happening meaning that came out of her own wrong imagination. She spoiled our lives as husband and wife even before the day of our wedding. But if she has been a bad wife, she has been a good mother and I am going to keep my thought on

that, and at my age the loss of sex fellowship does not mean what it would have in my earlier years."

The modern young girl who understands herself and is not afraid of her sex nature, who realizes that every normal woman has strong sex desire, is not at all frightened by the occurrence under the stimulus of intimate fellowship of an awakened sex nature. In her looking forward to marriage she has included an idea of sex union in her thought of what the experience should bring. She is ready, therefore, to deal frankly with sex whenever it appears, and expects before she marries to have a frank understanding with the man whom she loves. The trouble comes when the second type of girl is keeping company with the reticent man, or the frank man is associating with the first type of woman. Then there is such a difference in the interpretation of frankness and sincerity in dealing with sex that comradeship is endangered.

An engagement is simply a public recognition of the obligation that each of the two young people feels to the other. It is the announcement of the success of the courtship and a promise of marriage. Although it changes the social status of the young woman and the man, it does not end courtship. It is not a trial marriage, for marriage cannot be tested until it has actually come, bringing with it a finality of commitment. Sex still must be kept under control, but it should not occasion surprise that the sex im-

As Indian formulae  
chat mangni, put byah

pulses seem to gather strength, for that is natural enough as the thought of the wedding day becomes more and more definite. If sex takes possession of the comradeship, in addition to all the other dangers this involves, it adds a hazard that marriage may lose its fullness of meaning and come to seem primarily the legalizing of a relationship which sex dominated. Thus, instead of affection surmounting sex, love is overshadowed by impetuous physical craving.

Since the engagement is apt to bring this strain of an awakening sex desire under the promise of mutual affection, it must not be unduly prolonged. Of course there are interesting cases of very lengthy engagements that turned out happily. One of these was Huxley's waiting for his wife the years necessary to offer her economic security; but it is well to remember that they were especially favored in this long waiting by one's being in Australia and the other in England.

In these days of freedom, women who are willing to allow any amount of intimacy and sex contact except the final climax of intercourse need to be told that they are guilty of most unjustly putting physical and nervous strain upon their lover, who is stimulated almost to the breaking point and then blocked from getting the relief his body craves; that their policy is not only immoral, but that in addition it encourages them to get sex satisfaction without following the

normal course. For this procedure they may have to pay heavily after marriage, when to their dismay they discover that through habit they have come to enjoy what are called the secondary forms of sex more than actual intercourse. If when this happens any woman credits herself with a greater refinement than the man, she merely adds self-deception to her unwholesome sex character. The fact is that, however she may interpret her experience to herself, she is mildly perverted and has lost the normal biological urge. There is a difference between the kiss of the engaged and the woman's learning to find through kissing a relief that should come only through an orgasm. It is because of the strain of engagement that youth of good judgment, eager to guard faithfully the welfare of each other, seek to bring the courtship soon to an end by entering marriage.

#### IV

### *The Sex Equipment*

Fortunately men and women do not require for the art of love any detailed knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of sex. It is natural, however, for those who are about to marry to feel the need of some understanding of their sex equipment and its functioning, and perhaps even more to have a correct idea of the organs of the opposite sex.

The information they seek should be given them in definite and accurate form, even though it need not be presented in great detail. Men usually have a far better idea of their sex organs than women do of theirs. This is in part a result of the franker recognition of sex by men than by women. Strange as it may seem to men, there are women who until they marry know practically nothing of the structure of their organs of reproduction, having had no curiosity, or at least none they would admit to themselves, but

merely an eagerness to keep from consciousness everything pertaining to their own sex. On account of the vague ideas young women about to marry may have regarding their own sex equipment, it is recommended that by means of a mirror they at least become familiar with that part of their sex equipment that can be seen from the outside.

When we speak of the sex equipment, we usually mean the sex organs. It is important, however, that we do not regard the physiology of sex in narrow terms, because the sex organs are intimately related to the body as a whole and especially to the nervous system. The reflex center that has control of sex activity is within the spinal cord. Sex sensation itself, even when localized, is actually reported to consciousness by the brain. The situation is just as it is with the eye. The sensation of sight is received through the pupil, passes over the optic nerve, and is turned into conscious experience in a definite part of the brain. Thus, the eye is the medium of sight but does not itself bring forth the sensation of vision. So, although the sex organs furnish the means of sensation, the conscious sex experience is a product of the brain.

It is especially important that this relation of brain and sex organs be kept in mind, since it is rarely true that the organs themselves fail to function on account of structural difficulty. When trouble appears



it is usually what we call psychic, that is, it is a difficulty created by experience and recorded in the brain.

In the later years of life, as at adolescence, there is a reversal of this causal sequence, when the changes gradually taking place in the sex organs affect the personality. During the adolescent years the speeded-up development of the reproductive system produces changes that are more marked than the opposite regressive changes that include the "change of life" or climacteric and continue slowly as a part of the total picture of aging. Throughout the years of potential sex activity and reproduction, the endocrine functions of the gonads—the ovaries of the woman and the testicles of the man—contribute directly to the chemical as well as the nervous makeup of the person. This contribution is understood both to affect and to be affected by the sex activity of the individual.

*The male organs.\** Man's sexual equipment is more thoroughly localized than the woman's. It is partly on the outside of the body and partly within. It carries on three functions: The emptying of the bladder through the penis, and sexual intercourse, which necessarily involves as another activity man's contribution to the act of reproduction. The penis is made up of tissue that is spongy, permitting a considerable gathering of blood when there is sex excite-

\* See diagrams on pages 98 through 101.

ment. When it is thus stimulated it becomes stiff and considerably larger. Unless this erection occurs it is impossible for the male to perform the sex act. When the penis is unaffected by sex excitement it hangs limp and has no more sensitiveness than most parts of the skin surface of the body. Its stimulation may come from erotic thoughts, by which from the central nervous system itself the mechanism that leads to erection is started; or by friction at its most sensitive end, the glans, or, as is usually true, by a combination of various localized sensations and erotic thought.

The penis varies in size in different men, but is not necessarily in proportion to the size of the rest of the body. Its variation in size is usually not great and rarely is it of much significance for the matrimonial union. It is usually about an inch in diameter and from three to four inches in length. When filled with blood the penis becomes one third larger. It also lifts itself so as to be at right angles from the body. The glans at the end is the sensitive part covered by mucous membrane having the color of the lips.

Extending through the penis is the urethra, through which the bladder empties itself, and which at the climax of intercourse permits the coming out of the semen, containing usually many millions of spermatozoa which are thus deposited in the woman's vagina, usually on the cervix.

Beneath the penis hangs the sack of skin which is called the scrotum. Within this are suspended the testicles, which manufacture spermatozoa, the male germ cells, and also have an endocrine function. The scrotum is made of skin, fibrous tissue and muscle. Besides protecting the testicles, it regulates their temperature, which has to be several degrees cooler than the inside of the body if the spermatozoa are to be fertile.

The testicles, or testes, are two firm ovoid glands, about an inch and a half long and an inch wide. Within each testis are coiled about a thousand feet of seminiferous tubules, lined with many layers of cells, called seminal epithelium, which represent different stages in the continual formation and development of spermatozoa, called spermatogenesis. Between the coils of the seminiferous tubules is connective tissue and interstitial tissue. The latter secretes the male endocrine principle, androgen, also called testosterone, a powerful chemical or combination of chemicals poured into the surrounding blood, which carries it to other organs, where it has important physiological effects. This male sex hormone produces all the typical male sex development and stimulates and regulates all the sexual functions of the male.

A complicated system of tubes carries the spermatozoa from the testicles to the outer end of the penis. Efferent ducts take the newly developed sper-

matozoa, quietly floating in the thin, watery discharge from the seminiferous tubules of the testicles, to the epididymes, comma-shaped organs lying close to the upper and backward surface of each testicle. Here the spermatozoa are thought to live for some weeks, undergoing further maturing changes which bring them to completion. The vas deferens leaves the tail of the epididymis, going upward in the scrotum, at the base of which it passes through the abdominal wall by an opening called the inguinal canal, to enter the abdomen and pelvis. Running between the bladder and the rectum, the broadened lower end of the vas deferens, its ampulla, also stores spermatozoa. Beside the ampulla of each vas is a seminal vesicle, which adds fluid to the semen. The ejaculatory ducts drain each seminal vesicle and ampulla, carrying their contents to the urethra. The prostate gland then adds to the semen an important, highly alkaline secretion.

The male germ cells, or spermatozoa, that float in the seminal fluid are so small they can be seen only under a microscope. Shaped like a tadpole, the spermatozoon carries in its head the part of the offspring's inheritance that is contributed by the man; the tail moves like a whip, to propel it along, after ejaculation at the time of the male orgasm. Many spermatozoa swim through the woman's uterus and up into her tubes, where fertilization can be effected, if an ovum is waiting or appears before the spermatozoa

lose their power. The motility of the spermatozoa is understood to explain some undesired pregnancies when sex play has continued after ejaculation, or when the discharge was deposited just outside the vaginal entrance.

In the continent young man an accumulation of semen is occasionally discharged during sleep. In moderation these nocturnal pollutions or emissions, sometimes called "wet dreams," are natural and harmless. If very frequent or accompanied by marked depression, they should be reported to a good doctor. Daytime pollutions are less common, and should always be reported.

*The female organs.\** As compared with that of the man, the sexual equipment of a woman is more complicated, is mostly within her body, and is more widely diffused. Between her thighs she has the vulva, two parallel folds of skin called the larger lips. After puberty these are covered with pubic hair. If these two folds of skin be pressed apart, within are found two lesser folds of mucous membrane which are known as the lesser lips. These contain glands from which during sex excitement fluid pours forth which, acting as a lubricant, makes it easier for intercourse to take place.

Within the vulva at its upper end is a small hooded bulb, the clitoris, made up of tissue similar to that

\* See diagrams on pages 102 through 107.

of the penis. Its function is to swell slightly when the woman is sexually excited. It corresponds to the glans penis in serving as a source of stimulation under gentle friction. The clitoris is very small, being ordinarily less than one-fifth inch in diameter. Like the glans penis, the clitoris needs careful cleansing to free it from the slight amount of cheeselike matter called smegma that accumulates about it. Below the clitoris is the urethra, which is the opening into the bladder.

Below the urethra is the vagina which as its name suggests is a membranous tube into which the penis enters. Closed at one end, it measures from three to five inches in length. Ordinarily in a state of relaxation it is collapsed and tightly closed. It is capable, however, of being very greatly expanded, being composed of muscles in folds which permit the necessary stretching in the case of childbirth when the child passes from the uterus through the vagina out into independent life. Intercourse takes place by the passing in and out of the penis in this vagina.

At the entrance of the vagina is found a thin membrane, the hymen, which partly or fully covers the entrance. This used to be thought of as a means of testing the virginity of the woman, but as we shall see in a later chapter it is now recognized that this is not reliable. It seldom so thoroughly covers the opening as to make it impossible for the menstrual

flow to pass out. When it does interfere with the monthly period it has to be perforated. With intercourse also it has to be pushed aside, or, when unusually thick, stretched or slit by a physician, in order that there may be access.

The uterus is a pear-shaped muscular organ about three inches long and two inches broad at its upper end suspended in the pelvic region by strong ligaments. Since the child grows within the uterus, it has to be prepared for rapid and great expansion. Its walls are thick and this muscular tissue stretches as is necessary with the increasing size of the growing child. In proper position it lies at right angles with the vagina into which it opens. Its mouth, the cervix, goes down within the vagina forming a slight groove near the end of the vagina. The uterus, or womb, often gets out of position, sometimes being tipped back, or retrodisplaced. This condition used to be thought to cause various "female weaknesses," and attempts were made to correct it, often by dangerous as well as useless operations. Now it is realized that a tipped womb is harmless. If the cervix, or neck of the womb, is slanted in such a way as to prevent its receiving the discharge of semen at the climax of intercourse, this fault is easily made up for by simple measures that may be advised by the gynecologist.

The uterus seems to have no direct part in coitus, but responds to general stimulation by moving



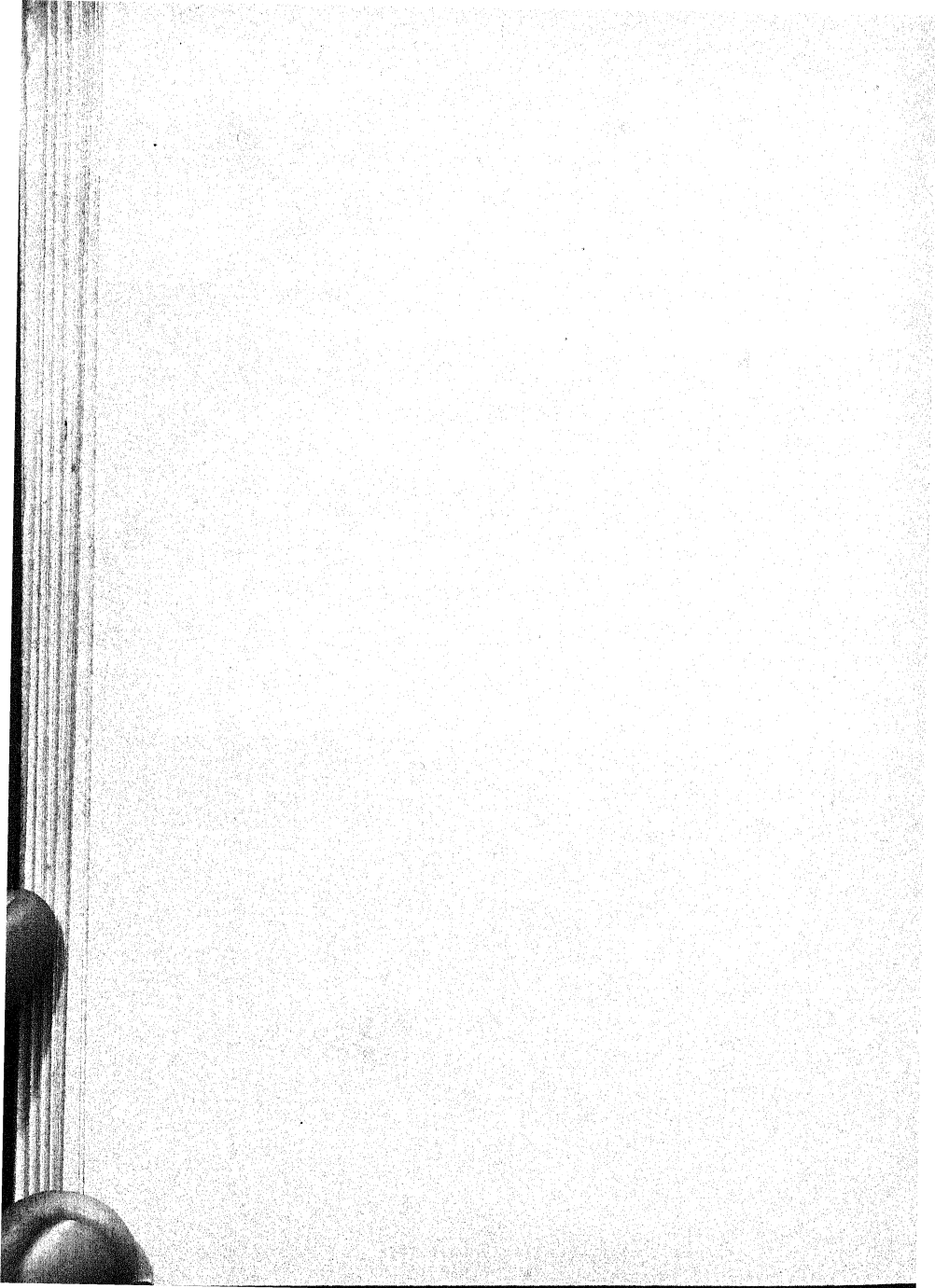
slightly down into the vagina and producing a faint suction. Some women during intercourse greatly enjoy contact with the lower part of the uterus at the point where it enters the vagina.

Leaving the left and right sides of the uterus by very small openings just below its fundus, or upper end, the Fallopian tubes curve up and over the ovaries, in front of which their four or four and a half inch lengths end in a number of fringes. Each ovary is about the size and shape of a large almond. The ovaries both produce female germ cells and by endocrine action produce estrogens, the female hormones, which cause the development of the sex characteristics, such as the bodily formation, voice and hair growth, and other feminine attributes, and maintain the female sex functions. The female germ cells, called ova or egg cells, are much larger than the spermatozoa, being barely visible to the naked eye; they are comparatively few in number, approximately one a month being matured during the years from the beginning of adolescent fertility until about the time of the menopause; and they cannot move under their own power. The ovum carries the part of the child's inheritance contributed by the woman.

When ovulation, or the ripening of an ovum and its liberation from the ovary occur, it is assumed that the ovum usually, after being free for a short time in the abdominal cavity, reaches the opening in the



fringed end of the Fallopian tube, down which it is believed to be moved by the action of the cilia lining the tube. When an ovum is fertilized this is understood to occur generally in the tube, probably within two days after ovulation. After a spermatozoon burrows into the ovum, effecting fertilization, the ovum rejects all other spermatozoa. The journey of the fertilized ovum through the tube to the uterus is estimated to take several days. The fertilized ovum then becomes implanted in the lining of the uterine cavity, where it continues to develop during the nine months of fetal life. At the end of the pregnancy the infant is delivered through the vagina, or birth canal, to the outside world.



The illustrations that follow are the work of Dr. Robert L. Dickinson. These diagrams, together with the explanations that accompany them, are here reproduced by his permission.

## EXCRETORY ORGANS

Kidney, cut open to show the structure.

Pelvis of the kidney, the basin where the urine collects.

Ureters, which carry the urine to the bladder. They are actually about ten inches long, but are here cut.

Bladder. The dotted lines lead to the opening of the two ureters.

## SEX ORGANS

Urethra, shown distended in this upper outline.

Meatus, the opening of the urethra, through which both the urine and semen are passed.

Testicle, on the left side of the drawing, turned sideways and cut across to show where, in minute ducts in compartments, the spermatozoa are manufactured.

Testicle, on the right side of the drawing, hanging in place in the scrotum.

Scrotum.

Epididymis on the right side, outside view. (See Plate II.)

Epididymis head } Inside view, spread out to show structure.

Epididymis tail }

Vas Deferens, or Seminal Duct, leading to ejaculatory duct (see Plate II). On the left side it is shown cut across to reveal the tiny tube which carries the spermatozoa.

Spermatic Cord, made up of muscles, nerves, and blood vessels, in which the vas deferens runs through the opening in the abdominal wall into the interior of the abdomen. The actual length of the vas deferens is about eighteen inches. The diagram foreshortens it to save space. A third is convoluted. The wide terminal portion (ampulla) is now known to be the reservoir for spermatozoa.

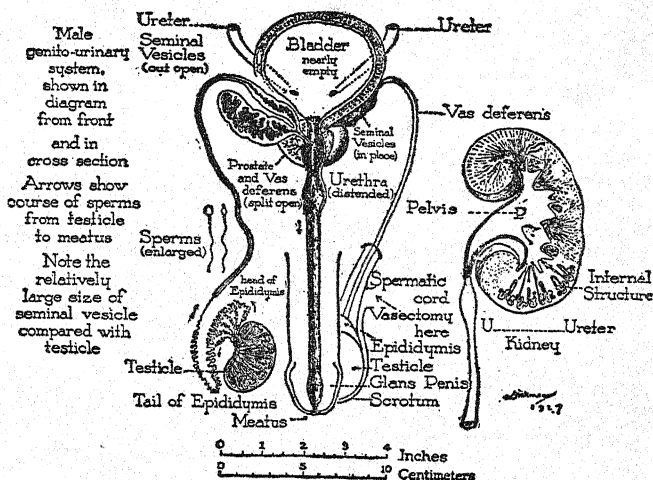
Seminal Vesicles on the left side of the drawing, cut across to show the inside, and pulled to one side, to show the forn.

Seminal Vesicles on the right side of the drawing, outside view, and shown in proper place behind the bladder.

Prostate Gland on the left side of the drawing, cut across to show the inside.

Spermatozoa, front and side views, greatly magnified. Set end to end it would take 500 to span an inch. Over 200 million spermatozoa are released in a single ejaculation. The arrows in the drawing show the course of the spermatozoa.

# PLATE I



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## MALE ORGANS, FRONT VIEW

The male sex organs and the urinary organs are closely related, so this plate includes the kidney, which collects the urine or waste water, and the two ureters which convey it to the bladder, where it is held till it is passed from the body.

On the right side the kidney is shown in its right size in relation to the other organs, but not in its proper place. It is cut in two, to show the inside.

## BONES

The bones are indicated by dotted lines.

Sacrum, the largest of the bones at the end of the spine.

Coccyx, the tip-end bone of the spine.

Symphysis, the front meeting place of the bony girdle or pelvis.

## EXCRETORY ORGANS

Rectum, which carries away the solid waste matter from the bowels.

Anus, the opening of the rectum.

Bladder, which holds the waste water or urine. Here shown nearly empty. When full it is much larger.

Ureter, the tube conducting the urine from the kidney to the bladder.

## SEX ORGANS

Penis, which fits into the vagina during the sex act. It is here shown relaxed.

Glans and Prepuce, or Foreskin.

Urethra, the passage which carries away the waste water or urine, and through which also the germs of life pass during the sex act.

The urethra is here shown empty. Plate I shows it distended.

Testicle, of which there are two, and in which grow the spermatozoa, or germs of life. The arrows in the drawing show the course of the spermatozoa. (For an interior view see Plate I.)

Scrotum, the bag which holds the testicles.

Epididymis, where the spermatozoa are finished. (See Plate I.)

Vas Deferens, which carries the spermatozoa to the urethra. There are two of these tubes, one from each testicle.

Seminal Vesicle, of which there are two, one on either side of the bladder.

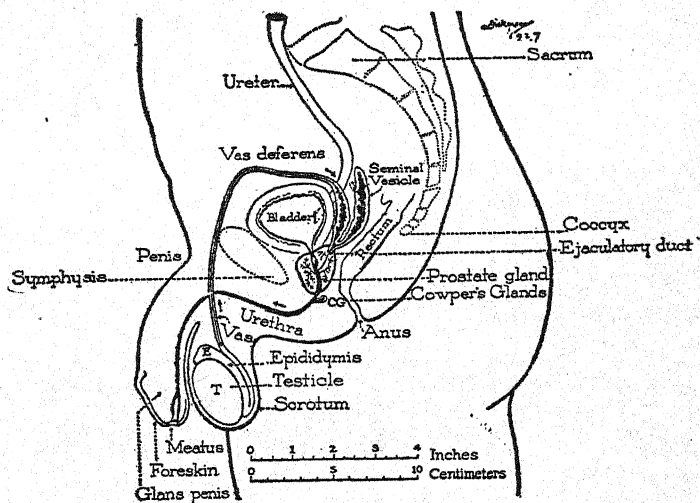
Prostate Gland, cut across to show the inside. The seminal vesicles and the prostate gland each secrete liquids forming the bulk of the semen and which act as carriers and stimulants for the spermatozoa.

Ejaculatory Duct, which expels the spermatozoa at the climax of the sex act.

Cowper's Gland, a tiny gland furnishing lubricant and alkaline secretion the function of which is obscure.

(Plate I shows spermatozoa, greatly magnified, front and side view.)

# PLATE II



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## MALE ORGANS, SIDE VIEW

A vertical section through the middle of the body. The generative organs are shown in heavy outline; the urinary organs and other parts of the body in lighter outline.

Ovary. The one at the left side of the drawing is in natural position and shows the outside. The one on the right side is laid sideways and cut in two, to show the inside.

Fallopian Tube. The one at the left side of the drawing shows the outside view. The one on the right side is a cross-section and shows the inside view.

Follicle or Sac, from which the ovum or egg has just escaped. The arrow indicates its course into the tube. The egg is like the dot on a small letter i, just visible.

Follicle, closed, the dot inside indicating the egg which will be freed from its sac a month later.

Corpus Luteum, or yellow body, the empty puckered sac remaining from the previous month.

Pavillion, the trumpet-shaped, leaf-like end of the tube, where the egg enters after leaving the ovary.

Ampulla, the widened fluted part of the tube.

Isthmus, the narrowest part of the tube, the inner passage of which is no larger than a bristle, just wide enough for the minute egg to pass. The meeting place of the egg and the sperm cells is between isthmus and pavillion. The egg is pushed along the tube for three days till it reaches the uterus.

Body of the Uterus, with front half cut away to show the inside.

Fundus of the Uterus, the upper rounded end of the uterus above the openings of the Fallopian tubes.

Nulliparous Uterus, virginal uterus.

Internal Os, or inner mouth, which divides the uterus into two parts.

It is in the cavity above this inner mouth that the egg becomes an embryo and grows into a baby.

Cervix, or neck of the uterus.

Cervix, parous, the cervix after having borne a child.

Cervix, bilateral laceration and eversion. The cervical opening during the birth of a child may be torn on both sides and turned outward.

External Os, or mouth of the womb.

Vagina, distended as in sex union.

Lateral Fornix, a hollow or recess in the upper end of the vagina extending upward to the side of the cervix.

Levator Muscle, which circles and closes the vagina. There are two of them, only one being shown.

Hymen, open as in intercourse.

Vulvovaginal Gland, which furnishes lubrication during the sex act.

Vulva, external sex organs.

Bulb of the Vestibule, a bunch of veins that, like the clitoris, enlarges from excitement.

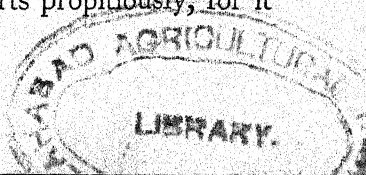
Lesser Labia, the inner lips of the entrance to the vagina.

Larger Labia, the outer lips.



the life of the woman who realizes through imperfect intercourse at the beginning of marriage how patient and kindly and unselfish her husband was. The very earnestness with which young men and women prepare themselves for the ordeal of the consummation of marriage is in itself an obstacle by creating undue anxiety and unnecessary nervousness when the test comes.

When writers attempt to impress their readers with the great significance of the first intercourse, they are not trying to make it seem that the destiny of matrimony is to be decided by the degree of success that the couple have in their first coitus. It is rather that apparent brutality, possibly due to awkwardness, nervousness, and ignorance on the part of the husband, may be forever resented by the wife, or that the actual selfishness of the man may so clearly come to the surface that the wife will never forget it. On the other hand, the woman's hesitancy to abandon herself to the sex embrace or her fictitious modesty, assumed because she supposes this is expected of her, may at a later time, when the husband finds that she is as human as himself in her desire for intercourse, lead him to doubt her honesty or even the strength of her affection. Where there is frank understanding that the first intercourse is somewhat experimental and may or may not be completely satisfactory, the experience starts propitiously, for it



is no longer a testing but an adventure together which is sure in the end to work out with success.

Neither the man nor the woman should look forward to their first intercourse with dread, the result of an exaggerated idea of its actual importance. Although there need not be the anxiety that in its extreme resembles panic, both the man and the woman wish to do everything that can be done in sensible preparation to make the first experience physically as satisfying as possible. It is well, therefore, to have a background of knowledge. One is not attempting to reach a standard of intercourse technique which must be the same for all who marry, lest the experience lose its value. The sex needs of all are not the same. Individuality enters here rather more than it does even in diet, and any of us that have had the experience know how irksome eating by formula becomes, if no recognition is made of the peculiar tastes and food habits of the individual.

The bride and groom are not starting after a definite goal in physical efficiency which has become the standard for all happy couples. They are exploring their own sex resources and learning in affectionate fellowship to work out for themselves a happy adjustment. This word adjustment carries, perhaps, the thought that most needs to be in the minds of the newly married. Coitus is not an adaptation by either the husband or the wife to the demands of the other

member of the sex partnership. The relationship must be reciprocal. There must be mutual adaptation, and it is just this that makes the experience a process of adjustment.

If the sex life starts happily it begins in such a way that the growth of satisfaction can proceed along with a greater depth of affection. The first intercourse can be outstanding and represent perhaps the most thrilling sex experience in the life of the individuals.

But it is seldom the most profound in its pleasurable-ness, and when it is, matrimony proceeds toward an anticlimax rather than making the normal growth that should come with the years. In no aspect of life is it more true that everything is good in its season, than in regard to wholesome sex experience. It is, therefore, useless to anticipate the mutual understanding of each other's needs that marriage fellowship finally brings. It is equally pathetic when the married couple look backward and feel that their greatest achievement in sex adjustment took place on their wedding night.

Sex life is exactly like the other phases of the living together of the young husband and wife. All along the line there has to be compromise and mutual adjustment as each brings his or her habits to the mutual undertaking of a life fellowship. Sex is not something apart, a peculiar skill which both the husband and wife must be ready to assume immediately

after marriage. It represents a process of adaptation by each to the needs of the other. It is an adjustment and should proceed with increasing success. The first intercourse must provide the right start, which means that whatever its proportion of physical success it must prove to be a genuine effort on the part of both to share an intimacy which, once they become skillful in the use of their resources, will bring them increasing pleasure and a fund of common interest.

A word of caution must be spoken lest some readers misinterpret a favorable beginning in their matrimonial venture. It is not at all true that the first intercourse always reveals awkwardness and nervousness and a degree of fear. In other words, there may be from the beginning highly successful coitus, and this must not lead either individual to suspect that the other has been already initiated.

At the very beginning some fortunate couples will start their life together with decided success. Intercourse being what it is, it would be strange if this never happened. There is so much connected with coitus that is reflex, built into the body by inheritance, that there are doubtless many—how many we do not know because at present there are not any safe statistics concerning such matters—who without any previous instruction or preliminary intercourse have a large measure of satisfaction from their very

first intimacy. Probably a part of this group, representing the peasant type, never travel very far in the art of love, so that although their beginning is happy their sex career in the long run remains meager.

It would seem unnecessary in view of all that has been said and written regarding it in recent years to insist that the absence of the hymen in the woman does not mean that she has not been a virgin. The facts, however, justify the repetition of this assertion. Some girls are born with practically no hymen; some lose their hymen by medical treatment in early childhood (while others suffer local inflammation unrelieved because their parents fear lest the stretching or cutting of the little girl's hymen by the physician shall later be misinterpreted); other hymens are stretched by much washing or by the active life of the modern girl; some are broken by accident.

Whatever purpose this apparent vestige of earlier body structure had at one time, it is entirely useless now. The hymen's presence is utterly without value. We can assume that once it had a purpose, but what that was science does not know.

Though the presence or absence of the hymen has no actual importance as proof or disproof of the wife's virginity, wrong thinking in regard to it on the part of either husband or wife may be of great importance, perhaps becoming the first snag the

matrimonial ship encounters. If the woman thinks that her hymen is likely to excite suspicion, she is likely to have anxious moments that are a bad preparation for her marriage. If she senses the fact that the condition of her hymen, which she knows has no significance at all as evidence of her earlier sex conduct, is exciting suspicion in her husband, her resentment is likely to be terrific. Although the absence or presence of the hymen should not have any significance for the newly married, it frequently is the first cause of the coming to the surface of traits of character that in the end are sure to prevent a successful marriage.

It is generally advised nowadays that the couple go to an interested and capable doctor for pre-marriage physical examination and advice. This is not the testing for freedom from venereal diseases, which the law of many of the states requires before the issuing of the marriage license, but a pelvic examination in preparation for marriage. A gynecologist, or specialist in woman's conditions, is usually both aware of the need of this consultation and well prepared to give it. If he finds the woman's hymen unusually thick and tough he can perform the gradual dilation or slight surgical operation indicated, as an office procedure.

✓ The premarriage examination should be made at least a month or six weeks before the wedding, if

practicable, to allow time for the treatment of any correctible defect or condition that might be discovered in either the man or the woman. Both the man and the woman should feel free to ask the doctor whatever questions may be puzzling them, as to their sex adjustment. The doctor will also give them valuable insight into the anatomy and physiology of sex intercourse as it may concern them in their married life.

One of the advantages of this premarital visit by the couple to the doctor is that they see the value of getting scientific help as a preventive measure throughout their marriage. Another is that both the man and the woman, by talking over their forthcoming marriage with an understanding doctor, may get rid of needless anxieties and avoid unnecessary difficulties at the beginning of marriage. Any pain or discomfort connected with intercourse should be a signal for the woman's consulting a doctor, preferably a gynecologist, since pain is always an indication that something needs to be corrected.

The two most common blunders at the beginning of marriage represent, as one would expect, contrasting extremes. The first is the cave man tactics concerning which much has been written. The man who thinks enough of a woman to marry her makes a poor choice when for the sake of a temporary physical satisfaction he surrenders for all time her loyalty

and respect. Yet this still happens in countless cases almost immediately after the wedding, when the man, under the control of physical passion, takes possession of the woman's body as if it were an object to which by the marriage ceremony he had obtained a right.

To the normal woman nothing could be more disastrous than this exhibition by the husband of an utter disregard for his wife's feelings. She will rightly come to feel that he has married her merely for her body, and as a consequence she will never yield it to him with the abandon that he craves.

The husband is not always as selfish as he seems. It is at times his ignorance and awkwardness, a misinterpretation of the part he has to perform, which leads him to seem to be so indifferent to his wife's feelings. A good guide for him is to fall back into the spirit of courtship and start love play with his wife as if she were still in the status of their comradeship before marriage. It is usually not so much the strength of his passion that shocks her as her lack of readiness for it. This comes about from his giving her too little time for the preparation she needs in the interlude before intercourse. In other words, the stimulus that acts so quickly and directly upon him needs to have time to stir up the more elaborate sex equipment that belongs to the wife. In this precoitus love-making the wife will usually follow the cue of



his leadership and gradually become more and more eager for the consummation of marriage.

In this procedure it would be a decided mistake for the husband to think that his preparation is exclusively of a physical sort. There is such a thing as stirring the body passions of a woman against her own desire. In a recent case a man who was not only skillful and strong in sex appeal but who had also been given counsel by one of the best of the physicians specializing in problems of sex, in spite of all these advantages, due to his selfishness and his unwillingness to recognize the psychic needs of his wife, found his marriage becoming less and less happy until it ended in her divorcing him on the charge of cruelty.

It is by making the first coitus not only agreeable, but the natural expression of affectionate contact, that it becomes the basis of a successful marriage. Affection and sex have to be fused by bringing the spirit of love directly into the sex act itself. When this happens there is no risk of selfish impetuosity, since when passion rises to high levels both man and woman have reached intensity through preliminary stimulation.

✓ It behooves the man under ordinary circumstances to start showing his affection by the kisses and body contact that the woman welcomed during the engagement. Little by little this love play should be carried

Key word, ↑ to greater intimacy, care being taken not to make the woman feel that she is being hurried along or pushed into more intimacy than she desires. After a half hour or an hour of loving, the woman is usually as eager for coitus as any man could be.

There are times when, due to the nervous fatigue of the wedding and travel attending the honeymoon, the young woman is too tired to respond to any long caressing. This is not at all because of any lack of sex, but merely because, as will always be true throughout her married life, when her energy sinks too low she must have sleep and rest and cannot further expend her vitality in coitus. As soon as the man discovers this either by her reaction or, better, in the case of a perfectly frank woman, by what she says, he will leave her alone and do his utmost to provide for her the necessary rest. He will find generally with the coming of the morning that the expression of affection, which she would have reacted against unfavorably the night before because of fatigue, is now thoroughly welcome and met with responses. He will ever be grateful that he had the opportunity to show himself master of the situation, ready to bide in patience a favorable time for their first venture in physical union.

Even if the woman is a good sport and tries to put aside her reluctance to enter upon sex stimulation and not disappoint her husband, if he can detect that

her mood is one of fatigue, he may well ask her to postpone until she has become rested their consummation of marriage. Such a situation as this has no difficulty for those who are absolutely frank and are willing to express their true feelings about sex as about any other common interest.

In contrast to the husband who rushes into intercourse is the one who postpones for one or several motives the first coitus. Although this is not so common a mistake as that of the impetuous husband, it at least happens frequently enough to receive warning from all who are familiar with the difficulties of early marriage. Doubtless this policy on the part of the husband is in many instances favorably received and deeply appreciated by wives who feel too tired out or too nervous after the wedding ceremony to go through an ordeal which they fear. Such wives do not bring their reaction to the family counselor. On the other hand, there are women who date their first feeling of hostility to the husband from the wedding night when, in spite of their expectations and readiness to enter intercourse, nothing happened.

It is interesting to search out the various motives that operate to lead husbands to this apparent unconcern. Interpreted by the wives as a lack of interest or weakness of sex impulse, it is usually the result of an entirely different motive. As has been said, it is

In this case wife is certainly not right i.e. not intelligent one. P.N. DIXON 12/20/21 715 F. J. L.

at times merely the desire to protect the woman from what the husband has been led to think she fears, based upon the belief that she is too tired to enter upon an irksome or even painful experience. Instead of saying this the husband keeps quiet, with the consequence that his motive is all too often misunderstood. There are other times when the explanation is not in the husband's thought of his wife, but in his thought of himself. He is the victim of fear and postpones meeting a test he dreads. The fear that gathers behind this refusal to face the situation commonly takes one of three forms.

In one, the trouble is that the husband has heard so much about the risk of forcing himself upon his wife that he feels he should await her invitation. When she supposes that the initiative should come from her husband she naturally gives him no cue, and the more embarrassed he gets, the less easy it is for him to break through and assume the leadership she expects. It is evident that at the bottom of such a situation is lack of frank understanding, and that the courtship has failed to provide the comradeship that should save from so unfortunate a beginning of marriage.

In the case of P., the husband, from what he thought a highly conscientious desire to save his wife from attentions which he took it for granted she would not at that time wish to receive, evidenced

no sex interest whatsoever on their wedding night, and intercourse did not take place until two or three days had passed. After about two years of apparently uneventful married life, this wife announced to the great astonishment of her husband, on returning from a trip to a neighboring city, that she had there met a man with whom she was going to live, with or without a divorce, and that she had merely returned home in fairness to tell him of her determination. It was not an easy task to save this particular household from what at first seemed inevitable divorce. But eventually it was discovered how unsatisfactorily the man had been meeting the sex needs of his wife, while he all the time thought himself unselfish in not demanding of her as much sex satisfaction as he actually craved. Their trouble was largely sex maladjustment, although financial differences contributed to the problem. The sex element was distinctly the result of misinterpretation and lack of frank understanding.

Another fear that influences husbands is the thought of failure. They have gathered the idea that only the sophisticated can go through the first coitus without revealing great awkwardness. Often there has been for several weeks before the wedding a great deal of brooding, until in the end the man is literally in a state of panic. This is the explanation of many of those strange cases of which one occa-

sionally hears, in which the bridegroom almost at the moment of the wedding either runs away or fails to appear to go on with the ceremony. It is not by any means loss of desire for the woman that leads to this precipitate retreat; it is probably most often lack of self-confidence. We are all familiar with the fact that in preparation for athletic contests there is such a thing as going stale. This condition can come about whenever there is an unreasonable concentration upon an approaching task. In college circles it is frequently seen in the examinations of those coming up for higher degrees who find themselves mentally less alert than usual and sometimes even have a sort of mental panic because they have become nervous from too much preparation for their testing.

To those happily married it seems almost impossible that any one should so lose self-control by merely thinking about the first sex intercourse, but to the inexperienced the ordeal may seem overwhelming in importance, and there may be a sense of inadequacy which at least in part is a product of ignorance in matters pertaining to sex.

In certain individuals this fear of failure takes a very definite shape. We suspect that in some of these cases there has been an earlier experience that has led to the idea. At any rate, these men when they draw near to the wedding night worry about their not being vigorous enough to perform the sex act. They

who might have thought that  
 dread lest they should prove to be impotent, and, as a consequence of their fear and the accompanying nervousness, in some instances at least, suffer from the very thing of which they were afraid. Fear and nervousness in the woman may tighten the vagina and make intercourse difficult, but these conditions in the man may not only lead to difficulties, they may make the act impossible. Women of experience realize that under nervous strain the man may for the moment or even longer be impotent, but the newly-married wife may not have this information and the man may dread a failure which he takes it for granted she will not sympathize with or understand. Probably he would not meet any trouble at all if he were not the victim of his own imagination.

Occasionally the predicament in which the man finds himself is suggested by something that happened when at an earlier time he visited a prostitute. If this is true it is well for him to notice how different his married situation is from the previous experience. Formerly his desire was divided by another inner protest against an act which in his heart of hearts he could not approve. Added to this was fear of venereal infection. In the midst of such conflict there was little opportunity for the nervous system to manage the mechanism involved in carrying out the sex act. As he looks forward to the wedding night he runs no danger of emotional conflict because of

→ some times it happens that at first night of marriage both husband and wife, because they are strange to each other (if they don't know

see girls must feel comfortable and free themselves during sex act  
 go so must boys  
 P.N.D.I.T 31st Jan '98

I am I not a potent man or am I? suffering from a disease but this is only a psychological fact. Actually about 90% of myths about any disease are mental and are due to mental weakness.  
 P.N.D.I.T 12:35 P.M. 31st Jan '98

don't feel themselves free or frank and think  
that if I offer for sex act to my partner  
then he or she will think that he or she

124 SEX IN MARRIAGE

is just impulses pushing him in opposite directions; his risk  
hunger I is mainly that of suggestion from the earlier experi-  
may ence. By recognizing this and then putting his  
body thoughts not upon the sex act itself but on the affec-  
and did tion he feels for the woman he is about to marry,  
mirror just for expressing this feeling of love in caresses and body  
sex act contacts, he will find the idea of impotency passing  
so they out of consciousness and in most cases he will have no  
feel. difficulty.

new. Wives trained under the former conventions of  
This may sex taboo sometimes complicate exceedingly the rôle  
cause the man has to play at the time of first intercourse.

Psychology Unable to see things squarely in their own think-  
impotency ing, they find it impossible to be frank and thereby  
if it doesn't help their husbands when the two are first left to  
each other in the privacy of the wedding night.

break There are fortunately several motives that impel  
quickly the woman toward the first intercourse. Having had  
frank no experience whatever on which to build the idea  
couple of sex stimulus, she may not have any well defined  
don't desire for coitus as a physical experience. On the  
allow other hand, she does have genuine affection and  
these knows, if she be not utterly ignorant, that it is in  
things her power to bring pleasure to her husband which  
to come he expects and greatly wants. Allied with this is the  
inside natural curiosity which makes her want to know  
their head just what is involved in the sex act about which she  
and get affected from these sort of things.

P. N. Dixit

12.50 P.M.

21st Jan 195-



has heard so much. She also wishes fully to commit herself and to be through with what she may perhaps dread. Out of these mixed motives comes a considerable impulse toward coitus, even if she feels no drive of physical passion. Sex, therefore, is not without its allies, but the experience is all too often difficult for both the husband and the wife merely because they are not equal to the necessary frankness.

When one thinks of the deception that had to be practiced even in her own thinking under the taboo that formerly operated so strongly as to deny the woman's legitimate sex needs, it seems a miracle that there was not much greater incompatibility of sex than there appears to have been. In these days there is little excuse for any woman's entering matrimony with the idea that she must hide her sex craving and yield herself with expressions of protest which can only puzzle and hamper, even if they do not deceive, the husband who is anxious not to do anything to hurt his newly-married wife.

There comes out of the custom of the past a bad way of starting marriage. No modern-minded young people should follow it. Among our parents and grandparents it was very common for the first intercourse to take place in darkness. This permitted the wife's keeping her modesty. There are a great many reasons why coitus should not take place in darkness. If a bad start is made, it is not always easy to turn

to the better way. Of course, it would be bad counsel to advise the husband always to insist upon this wiser program, but he should at least try not to have the lights turned out, as many women will suggest, when the two are approaching their first sex contact together. If there is anything that justifies being made an experience of the light it is sex intercourse.

It is good policy on the honeymoon not to take too seriously the opportunities for sight-seeing, but instead to make introduction to sex the important purpose of the trip. For this reason husband and wife should not start the day early if considerable sleep has been lost the preceding night in sex fellowship. It is well also not to have a long travel schedule, so exacting in its demands that no allowance can be made for loss of sleep. The American honeymooner, unless very experienced, is usually hampered by too much zeal in sight-seeing. It were better to cut the honeymoon so that concentration on the beginnings of sex intimacy can be had, saving for some future time a longer trip for sight-seeing. It is always unfortunate when the wedding has to be followed by a night in the sleeper. For most people, unless they travel constantly, a good night's rest is impossible on the train. For those newly married, to this difficulty of sleeping on the train is added the necessity of being close together without much privacy. A short trip to a neighboring city where there is a

good hotel offers far better conditions for a satisfactory honeymoon than a long journey on the train. Boat travel, aside from the risk of seasickness, is much to be preferred to several nights in the sleeper. Even the compartment of the sleeper, although it is far preferable to the ordinary berth or section, does not give the freedom and privacy of a stateroom on a steamer.

The danger of spoiling the honeymoon by worry over money has been discussed in the authors' *Wholesome Marriage*, but it is well to remember that anything that causes anxiety interferes with the sex pleasure of the honeymoon trip. It is not good to allow what is customary among the newly married of one's place or set to interfere with the planning of the honeymoon in accordance with one's own desires. If there is any time when two young people should be independent in working out their own plans, it surely is at this time when they launch their marriage venture.

*The Love Art of the Husband*

The American husband has been criticized by specialists acquainted with America's problems of marriage as a poor lover. If this be true of men it is doubtless just as true of women. Neither the average young man nor woman gives much thought to what may rightly be called the art of love. They cannot justly be said to be indifferent; it is merely that if they think at all of their approaching sex union they either concentrate upon the problems that they have heard are the most serious, or they innocently think that nature takes care of itself and there is no reason for special attention to the ways of intercourse. Even when there is a determined effort to find out how best to carry on marital experience, it is not always easy to get the necessary information.

Nothing could be more disastrous than for the man to seek enlightenment from a prostitute, for there

is nothing of less concern to her than the kind of personal sex relationship and adjustment that is necessary for satisfactory married life. She seeks only to get her cue from the man and to respond to his wishes. Even if the act is thoroughly disgusting, she must assume apparent passion, and her skill lies in catering to the man or in deceiving him. Obviously she cannot be a good instructor. As a consequence, the man must seek his information either from the printed page or in the counsel of some friend or specialist.

It helps the husband to keep in mind that his love life should be an art. His skill must come both from practice and from observing how best he satisfies his wife and himself. This does not mean that he must look forward to the learning of a definite technique as precise as that of golf or tennis. There may be for the tennis player the perfect stroke which each player attempts to achieve, there may be for the golf player just one right way to hold his club when he has a certain distance to make. Love expressed in sexual union cannot become thus stereotyped. It is more like the art of dancing or that of music. Exact repetition is difficult, the atmosphere changes, conditions vary, there are subtle differences from time to time, differences of mood, differences of desire, differences in the degree of passion. The great musician does not endlessly play over and over the same composition.

His preferences change. He is a great artist because he makes what his skill produces accord with his inner feeling. Thus it is with the true lover, only his task is double. He must harmonize with the fleeting moment of feeling of his wife as well as of himself. Thus he adjusts both to outward conditions and those within. If he is betrayed by his own feelings into catering only to himself, then his chance of artistic love-making completely passes and he must accept a meager pleasure, a one-sided satisfaction.

There is a sense in which it is true that in this generation large classes of women are for the first time achieving self-expression in sex experience. They have escaped from the convention which made it their duty to render pleasure to their husbands, without expecting much regard to be paid to their own needs.

It is, of course, easy to exaggerate this change of attitude on the part of women, because wise men have always found that their own satisfaction could not rise high if they remained indifferent to their wives' feelings. In practice the theory of woman's subordination in sex has probably been less widely observed than the preachments of the period would suggest.

Possibly there is now risk of overstressing the responsibility of the man and forgetting that the woman's part is not a passive one. She also has the

privilege of contributing to the love-making, for the art cannot be worked out successfully by either husband or wife alone. Woman's part is so important in coitus that it must be treated in some detail by itself. For the man, however, the first step toward a skilled love art is to realize that here as elsewhere in life the best values do not come to those who put themselves first. This, perhaps, is the most common fault of American husbands, the chief basis for the criticism of their immature love art.

It is folly to suggest or to encourage coitus when conditions are unfavorable. Hardly any program could be more absurd and in the end likely to break down matrimonial happiness than to have a stated time, week after week, month after month, for coitus.

To follow the calendar in the marital life is to reveal at the outset such a mechanical thought of intercourse that any genuine love art becomes impossible. Doubtless in the majority of marriages a sort of rhythm of frequency of intercourse gradually develops. This must never be so domineering as to approach the regularity of three straight meals a day. It is a beauty of the art of love that it cannot be standardized or made mechanical; it must remain flexible and sensitive to varying conditions, or it loses its flavor.

Favorable conditions for coitus require thought of both mental and physical conditions. *Tristram*

*Shandy* begins with the wife's asking her husband at an inappropriate time whether he has forgotten to wind the clock. Tristram Shandy dates his conception and misfortune from this occurrence, since her interruption occurred at a disastrous time for the love-making of the husband and wife. There is more in this incident than merely the wit of Laurence Sterne. It is indeed unfortunate for any child to be conceived into a family where intercourse means so little to either husband or wife as to permit its being broken in upon by questions of household routine or family management. If either husband or wife or both of them are under the control of worry or even have their minds upon something else that forbids the abandonment necessary for successful coitus, the intercourse should be postponed.

This is, of course, particularly true when, because of different points of view, they are contending or possibly quarreling about some decision which finally must be made. It is an atrocious situation that one sometimes finds when husband and wife after a violent conflict turn to coitus, a little later renewing their contention. When fellowship runs deeply, perhaps after a quiet self-revealing talk alongside of the smoldering wood of the fireplace, mutual thoughts of coitus may lead to an experience extraordinary in its richness—a pleasant memory for all time.

It might seem unnecessary to remind the husband



that he must pay due regard to physical conditions; for example, strict cleanliness must be observed, not merely for important sanitary reasons, but because of its aesthetic value. We have never ceased to protest against a wedding we once witnessed at a minister's home in northern New Hampshire. The bride appeared first, timid but dressed for the occasion, in good taste, and with great neatness; then came the man who was to marry her, right from the field in his overalls without even washing his hands. Had we been the clergyman we are sure that we would never have had the heart to pronounce that indifferent, animal-like man and almost terror-stricken woman husband and wife. The experience left with us one of the most pathetic memories we have ever had.

Of course, such an occurrence is rare indeed, but the wise husband will show special attention to his physical appearance at times when he looks forward to coitus. He should surely be as particular as he was during courtship.

There is one thing especially of which he needs to think, which might at first seem trivial but which is certainly not so. He should take good care that he is free from mouth odors. Occasionally we meet a person so afflicted or so indifferent that this offensive odor is almost unendurable during ordinary conversation. What must be the repulsion of the woman who has to endure this while in the most intimate

association possible? What the careful man needs to know is that for some people there is a tendency during intercourse to develop an acid mouth. To avoid trouble from this there should be a liberal use of milk of magnesia or some other alkaline mouth wash before beginning coitus.

It is most unwise to enter upon coitus when very tired or when one's spouse is thoroughly fatigued. The only justification for doing this is when from experience it has been discovered that coitus quickens sleep and makes it possible for the overfatigued individual to escape staying awake. The sufferer from headache or a nose cold or any other infection should abstain from coitus, because the body is in no condition for the expending of the energy intercourse requires.

If, as will often happen, the man finds himself covered with perspiration at the end of intercourse, he should take great care for a few moments not to expose himself so as to become chilled.

Privacy is of course desired for coitus, and any thought on the part of husband or wife that it may not be maintained adds tension and dissatisfaction to the experience. City people in apartments, or any who fear that their intimacy within their own home may be heard by others, find complete abandonment in coitus difficult. In building one's own house it will prove a good investment to have soundproof

walls so that there may never be any dread of being overheard. Without question one of the reasons why the modern American woman tends to suppress her emotional reactions to coitus in laughter, cries, and other sounds, is that she keeps the fear of being overheard so constantly in mind that she dare not be natural. Indeed, it is no uncommon practice for love-making that has been spontaneous in its laughter and expressions of endearment to sink into absolute silence just as soon as coitus starts. Such constraint is no advantage to wholesome sex intercourse, and occasionally the wife who is quiet merely out of prudence seems to the husband to lack vitality. Perhaps such inhibition does lessen sex feeling.

So much has been said about the need of the husband's assuming responsibility for mutual adjustment in the sex act, that the male reader may properly now ask that this be made specific by a more detailed discussion. Suppose for clearness' sake we think of the adjustment as involving thought and feeling as well as body adjustment. If we could tap the thought of many young husbands and wives, we would find that their ideas regarding coitus are as far apart as the East from the West, and when these differences lead to incompatibility or hamper sex enjoyment they necessarily become a menace to married happiness.

Here is an illustration of divergent thoughts that need to be brought into discussion and compromised.

The husband, being strongly sexed, looks forward during courtship to a great deal of sex enjoyment after marriage. He has previously protected himself from temptation by thinking of the opportunity his marriage will bring him for a satisfying sex life. He desires and expects that his wife will consent to very frequent coitus. She, on the other hand, has been taught by some one who has influenced her considerably that she must as far as possible maintain in marriage the spirit of courtship, and that she should not frequently give her body to her husband, lest by too much familiarity and indulgence he grow unappreciative and eventually tired of his wife's charms. In her thought, therefore, coitus is to be avoided as much as possible. With such different attitudes misunderstanding is almost inevitable.

If, however, as a result of his constant invitation and her frequent refusal to have coitus, their divergence comes up for discussion so that each frankly expresses the thinking responsible for the two different attitudes, a compromise can easily be brought about. Even the man does not want to have coitus cheapened by too much frequency. He does not want this to happen to his wife any more than to himself. The moment he sees that from her viewpoint frequent intercourse invites such a risk, he is willing to ask less often, that he may be more sure of having full enjoyment. On the other hand, the wife, when

she gets at the truth that is underneath the bad counsel she received, realizes that it is useless to attempt to continue in her marriage the spirit of courtship, and that the only thing she has to guard against is the making of coitus too commonplace.

It is not how often coitus is had that will decide the attitude taken toward it, but rather the spirit with which it is entered upon and the satisfaction that it brings. If the two are not together so often as to lead to loss of desire, there need not be any curbing of genuine desire. To attempt to reintroduce the strain of courtship would be most unfair to the husband and eventually to the wife herself, and would not tend to bring into deeper fellowship the two matrimonial partners.

The husband who is developing the art of love so far as the mental side is concerned needs to become an explorer. It is his business to encourage the give and take of thought-life, that there may not be a remnant of reticence in either husband or wife. Instead there will be a union of thought in the most extraordinary degree. Neither will hesitate to say anything that ought to be said to increase the pleasure of the sex act or to give the other a better clue as to how satisfaction may be increased. In not a few cases the first maladjustment of sex is in the realm of thinking. One of the individuals is ashamed to say what really should be known by the other; or

one has an attitude toward sex that forbids complete abandonment, so that there are always brakes set against sex momentum.

The art of love also requires an adjustment in feeling. This might well be thought of as an adapting of different temperaments or moods. Here the difference between the two is more serious, adjustment more difficult. For example, suppose one is distinctly prosaic, the other highly romantic. These differences will intrude upon sex, and unless there is genuine effort to recognize the natural difference between the two persons, a drifting apart will often occur. The prosaic person cannot be made highly imaginative, but he can, if he so wishes, increase his sympathy for the gifts he does not possess. It is inconceivable that there would have been any affection in the first place, had there not been on his part some admiration for the different quality of the woman he married. He, therefore, needs to cater to his utmost to the aesthetic and romantic elements that she attempts to bring into their sex communion. Flowers, perfume, colored lights, different settings, ranging from woodland privacy to the cottage by the sea, will all give coitus for both husband and wife added meaning. If he cannot suggest, he can at least be ready to fall into the changing moods of the wife, whose sex life will thrive provided it is not allowed to sink to the dull routine of a gray existence.

There may be some other temperamental difference, such as sex primitiveness on one side and great refinement on the other. The husband or the wife, and it is as likely to be one as the other, may most enjoy the sex act when it approaches the simplicity that we associate with the cave man. Great passion, absolutely direct and intense vigor, are primitive characteristics that greatly stimulate some and bring them supreme satisfaction. The other member of the matrimonial duet may resent sex in such form and enjoy it only if it is disguised by greater refinement, demanding from the partner, instead of directness, a great deal of play with sex eventually entering unobtrusively. Instead of overwhelming passion, tenderness, sympathy, and fertility of understanding bring this person more enjoyment. Evidently in such cases of sex differences the adjustment must be mostly a compromise, each honestly trying to sympathize with the other, so that they come to occupy common ground, which gives neither of them the extreme experience that they would naturally prefer. Such a policy of compromise is safer than an alternating program in which one has what he wills without regard for the thoughts or feelings of the other and then the second takes his turn, being indifferent to the attitudes of the first. This policy tends to strengthen the extreme demands of each and makes intercourse at times something tolerated in

order that at a later time it may be more pleasurable. The art of love, so far as the man is concerned, as it pertains to temperamental adjustment, calls for adaptation. The man must seek to adapt himself as far as he can to the demands of his partner. This starts him toward a compromise, the basis upon which in such cases mutual satisfaction must be built. Even in coitus the two can be complementary rather than one becoming a carbon copy of the other.

The art of love is primarily a physical adjustment. Perhaps the key word here that more than any other reveals the secret of final good adjustment is the term, *experiment*. There must be a seeking out by the husband of the procedure which in the end will bring most enjoyment to both the wife and himself. As has already been said, the husband must not think of this as something that can be made unchanging, once the best method is discovered, so that he merely needs to repeat over and over again the same thing in marital intimacy. The art of love never becomes so simple as that. It shrivels when it becomes stereotyped. There are definite points of possible conflict which the husband as well as the wife needs to recognize. First, perhaps, is the length of coitus. It is generally thought that most men move more rapidly than do women toward the final climax. Since women do not as a rule abandon themselves quite so thoroughly to the sex experience, it may be that the



difference between men and women at this point has been exaggerated, due to social influences that will more and more cease to exist.

Whatever the cause, the man is very often called upon to recognize that he needs to hold back as much as he can the arrival of the end of the sex act, that his wife may have more time to become sexually aroused. This is not so difficult as it seems. Most men have to some extent control of their reflexes, and by a little effort can tend to retard their movement toward the climax. Meanwhile the wife finds her sensations accumulating, since her sensitivity is not so localized and she does not depend upon movement to the extent the man does for her pleasure. From actual experience, provided he is observing, the husband can learn just when to stop for a moment the onrushing of sensations, that they may not reach their climax too soon for the woman's greatest pleasure.

It is easier for most men to depend primarily upon preliminary love play that excites the woman before starting intercourse, rather than upon the man's ability to check discharge.

The husband should not be content merely to attempt to regulate his own speed in the development towards the climax, but should give heed to the conditions that influence the woman to be more or less rapid in coming to her orgasm. Observation

is likely to show both the man and the woman that at certain times under certain conditions she arrives more quickly than at others. In trying to arrive at an explanation of these differences in her sex momentum, neither should be content to look too narrowly to the sex act itself. It will be found frequently that what happens during the day or considerably before the act of coitus itself determines whether at that particular time she will be slower or more rapid in reaching the climax. Of course, there are great differences between women, so that some are characteristically slow and others in comparison rather rapid. Even when a woman is habitually slow, patience and experiment will in most cases make a satisfactory adjustment between husband and wife possible.

It is sometimes their conflicting thoughts and their inability to give themselves with complete abandonment to the sex act that accounts for the slowness with which individual women arrive at a climax. Those who are free from morbid impressions gathered in childhood are less likely to have trouble in keeping pace with the movement of their husband's passion. Abnormal slowness is more likely to be the result of bad sex instruction or early shock than a condition caused by peculiarities of sex organization. It is fortunate that this is true, for the first can be more easily helped than the second. When the

trouble appears to be of bodily origin, counsel should be sought from some medical specialist.

One of the questions that newly-married people frequently ask is, What position should they take in coitus? There are many variations in position. In this country the commonest seems to be for the woman to lie on her back, with or without the knees drawn up, with the man in a horizontal position above her. A side position is often preferred at the beginning of marriage, during the latter part of pregnancy, and in other circumstances that make this the more comfortable choice. The woman kneeling astride the man is an advantageous position at times because it enables the woman to take a more active part.

There is more difference in the degree of intensity of the orgasm among women than among men. There are women who usually have a very slight climax so that they hardly know when they have reached the peak of sensitivity. Once it has arrived, their feeling gradually dies away until they eventually are relaxed. On the other hand, there are some whose reaction is fully as intense as that of the average man. Many women vary considerably from time to time, sometimes having a very faint and at other times a very vigorous orgasm. The degree of violence is not in itself important. If the woman is really satisfied, it makes no difference whether her climax has been very pronounced or not. At times she will

pass through several noticeable orgasms before her passion comes to an end. In this she is most unlike the man, who cannot immediately start coitus after having had a climax and discharge. He will require a rest period of from fifteen or twenty minutes to several hours or even days.

VII

*The Love Art of the Wife*

Who is the girl that succeeds in any new job she undertakes? The one who never makes a mistake? Far from it. Rather it is the one who is able to recognize her own errors and is capable of doing better next time. She who can think straight enough to realize what is required of her, and can face her own feelings honestly enough to forget whatever supposition of superiority clings to her—this is the girl who succeeds in her new undertaking, whether it be as wage-earner or wife.

To compare marriage to a job may seem to deny the rôle of marriage as the culmination of romance. But that is only because so few people thrill to the romance of the right job. The successful worker finds adventure and romance in her work. Marriage differs from courtship in its union of romance with prac-

ticality. Since these two are such strange bed-fellows, it is a blessing if humor be invited to attend their coming together.

Few marriages in this day and place start off without a full wind of romance. Nor can they travel far without bumping into the reefs of practical questions. Because of differences in makeup and early training, the man generally foresees the practical side of the physical union of marriage far more definitely and accurately than the woman. If the wife can approach the climax of her romantic life unhandicapped by vague forebodings or impossible expectations of bodiless ecstasy, she will not be so quick to have her feelings hurt and go cry-babying home to Mother, either literally or in the spirit.

To prepare oneself, being Woman, for the happy consummation of marriage, one has first to clear one's mind of the sweet-young-girl taboos under which one has grown up. Properly, the courtship has materially aided in this process, but the girl may have been so bound by the conventions as she interpreted them, that she aborted the natural development of love life between herself and her betrothed.

The *credo* of the well-oriented bride runs something like this:

I believe in the rightness and beauty of natural sex expression as the framework of love, without

which no matrimonial romance can be healthy or long-lived.

I believe that any sexual gesture, play or craving of my husband or myself is natural, provided only that it demands the participation and seeks the happiness of the mate as well as the self.

Believing this, I shall cease to take pride in my outgrown maidenly reserve, and will delight in freeing myself, as rapidly as they stand revealed, from any inhibitions that may lie in the way of perfect physical and emotional communion between my husband and me.

I realize that in the world of sex I am like a child before great works of art. My powers of appreciation have not been awakened. As a three-year-old looks unmoved on a masterpiece of plastic art and names it "Doll," so I may fail to respond adequately to the new stimuli that my husband offers me. But at least I will not smugly flatter myself on my superiority of delicacy when this occurs, but will face the truth—that I am as stupidly inert in this realm as I might expect savages or children or uncultured adults to be when confronted by a soul-stirring work of art whose significance lies outside their experience.

Further I must go in my self-searching and dig out the heaviest impediment to my progress toward married happiness—that I am worse off in this field than child or untaught adult in the world of art, for

not only am I unawakened to the wealth of possibilities spread before me: I have even been brought up under the Puritanical edicts, "This which men call beautiful is vile" and "Whatever man finds alluring must be shunned, for it is the work of the Evil One."

Now I may have thought within myself that these sayings of my elders were false, since I felt in my inmost being that sex was real and therefore not to be despised, but at least I had to abide by the decrees of those older and more knowing than I, so I acted as if I believed what they told me of the untrustworthiness of my own impulses toward sex fulfillment until I lost my own warmth of feeling under the shell of cool repression I wore so long.

I can see that the relationship upon which I am entering can be substantial only if I cast aside all hand-me-down attitudes of coldness and meet my husband more than half way in discovering the genuine warmth of my physical hunger for him. I can understand that the environment of his adolescence and early manhood has probably been such as to permit in him the very directness of thought and frankness of desire that my upbringing may have practically stolen from me.

As a result of our unequal approach to the romantic consummation of marriage, it is probable that we shall often misunderstand each other. When this



happens I will not rest until I get to the bottom of our difficulty, for only so can we find our way through the perplexities of our new relationship to the firm ground of complete harmony in our sex life.

I realize that my husband cannot always guess my hidden reactions and buried desires, and I will, therefore, make myself break through my vestigial shyness to let him know my longings, and the reasons, so far as I understand them, for my aversions. I will remember that my man, being human, may also be the victim of early repression that prevents his full and free acceptance of the value of sex in all its natural manifestations. In unimportant details of sex play, it may happen that one of us will like what the other dislikes, but frank discussion will usually start the melting away of these dislikes, so that in time, as we become more sure of ourselves and of each other, we are better able to satisfy each other's needs.

Aware of the fact that we are both novices in the art of ministering to each other's physical love needs, I shall not allow disappointment to invade our honeymoon, but will remind myself that this is a period of beginnings when awkwardness and dumbness cover the intensity of tenderness that gropes for ways of adding to the happiness of the beloved. As the shyness and misunderstanding of the early days of courtship gave way to unshakable confidence, so

the uncertainty and ineptness of the first marital experiences will merge into the supreme joy that goes with the better adjustments of each succeeding stage of married life.

Sex adjustment, like courtship, involves the give and take of two persons. I shall not be so naïve as to suppose that I can give adequate outlet to my own primal urge or the highest joy to my mate by playing only a passive rôle in our physical love-making.

Starting with such an attitude as this, the new wife may never be able to understand why any wives are less than superlatively happy, so smoothly does she move on through the increasing satisfactions that attend her introduction to the joys of mature sex life. If this is not her experience, it may be that she is but giving verbal allegiance to the idea of sex as a rightful part of her life, while in reality she still fights against disrobing herself of her maidenly reserve. To check up on her actual acceptance of the new rôle she has taken over, let her ask herself these questions:

1. Do I still run blindly away from sex, impressing my husband chiefly with his need of being careful not to shock or disgust me by plain speech and direct action?

2. Am I honest enough in my adherence to my new code of adult sex expression to realize that *shock* is often another way of spelling *thrill*, since I may be shocked or disgusted by that which would naturally thrill me, did not my virginal taboos interfere?

3. To what extent can I rid myself of these taboos and learn to welcome new physical sensations and deeply stirring psychosexual emotions for their own sake, plus the delight of knowing them a bond between me and my mate?

Few of us have escaped childhood experiences that strongly condition us against one or another harmless form of sex play. Recognizing the cause of our antipathy, we may succeed in reëducating ourselves in this regard; at any rate we cease thinking of our particular brand of coldness as a virtue. The moment we hope to overcome these deficiencies, we are on the road to freeing ourselves from them. This is an advantage because of the importance of sex play as a means of preparing both actors, but especially the female, for participation in coitus.

Whether by nature or as a result of her training in repression, the woman is usually slower than the man in reaching the climax of the sex act. For this reason, it is necessary that the time required to bring to completion her part in intercourse be shortened by anticipatory sex play which awakens her passion.

For woman, as for man, sexual intercourse relieves tense nerves, stabilizes the emotions, and vivifies or rejuvenates the personality. Even from the thoroughly selfish viewpoint of wanting to make the most of herself, that she may be attractive and free from "nervousness" or gloom, any wife is wise who develops her ability to respond to the love needs of her husband, until she, too, becomes sex-conscious, and learns to recognize the symptoms of her own sex hunger, then without false modesty takes steps to satisfy this basic physical want as readily as she would prepare to eat or sleep when those bodily needs make known their presence.

There is no greater surety of permanency of affection than the meeting of husband and wife in a conjugal embrace that lifts each to a higher plane of happiness, and is followed by the relaxation that restores the whole organism of each to its optimum condition. No man likes to receive sex favors from his wife, while compelled to admit that he is unable to give her as much pleasure and relief from strain as he receives.

By one safe standard a woman may judge whether she is successfully completing the sex cycle of desire, shared pleasure, and satisfaction. So generalized is her sex feeling that if she only allows the mood of excitement that possessed her to die down gradually, as she lies quietly reveling in contemplation of the

peace she has brought her man, her own state of tension will gradually disappear, until she, too, sinks into the perfect sleep that is the mark of sexual completion.

At this point the novice, uncertain of herself, may spoil the event by her ignorance of biological facts. Romantically supposing the love embrace to be solely emotional, using the body as a mere tool, she ignorantly expects her husband, after he has achieved sexual gratification, to make love to her more fervently than before. When this does not occur, being altogether against nature, the uncomprehending, self-centered wife may either tease her husband with unseasonable demands for attention or nurse hurt feelings as she mulls over the sudden vanishing of her husband's absorption in her. The understanding wife learns to keep step with her mate; then, when coitus is finished, she is as ready as he to be left in peace.

The couple who want to travel onward from the first thrills of honeymoon days, so that custom will not stale the bliss of physical nearness, should never allow any form of love-making to become routine, or, worse still, a duty. The bride who peevishly reminds her husband to kiss her whenever he leaves or enters the house is killing the spontaneity of his caresses for her and forcing him to replace the irregularly recurring impulse to fondle her, with the

prosaic habit of osculating punctiliously, in much the same way that he uses a doormat or toothbrush—because it is the scheduled time for this performance, not because he is irresistibly driven to the act.

Better trained in the art of courtship than in the ways of marriage, the inexperienced wife may try to relive the dead joys of courtship days, by acting as if the peripheral erogenous zones, eyes, lips, cheeks, hair, hands, and breasts, were more aesthetic or more unworldly than the basic love centers that are dedicated to unmistakably specialized biological purpose. In time she will learn that the type of love play that has been permitted in her chaste maidenhood is superficial and unsatisfying compared with the more complete expressions of married love in the conjugal embrace. The wife whose goal is harmonious sex adjustment does not stir up her man for the sake of satisfying her vanity by putting him again in the position of suppliant lover.

This does not mean that sex stimulation should always be followed at once by coitus, but that sex stimulation should be recognized as such, and not misnamed and esteemed as a higher, because less earthly, form of love.

The wife whose sex needs are being adequately met will scarcely be tempted to indulge in jealous thoughts, so sure is she of herself. This is a weighty advantage in her married career, for nothing breeds

estrangement so quickly as jealousy. Founded usually on nothing more than the jealous person's perverted imagination, fed by her feeling of inferiority, it soon makes any home so miserable as to drive away affection and loyalty.

The woman aware of her sex needs may find that, other things being equal, her most intense cravings for sex fulfillment bear some relation to her menses, coming, perhaps, either just before, after, or midway between the monthly periods. She who doubts the warmth of her passionate nature will do well to accept the aid of her "time of the month" in educating her sex powers.

✓ Any wife who does not eventually learn to enjoy the sex side of marriage should seek the advice of a gynecologist or other doctor, and a marriage counselor. It is not fair to herself, to her husband, nor to her children, to shut herself off from her rightful rewards in married happiness.

No woman who wishes to live a complete life, enjoying and benefiting from her sex experiences as she enjoys good health and benefits from food and sleep, can afford to handicap herself by suffering from removable superstition and ignorance in regard to that portion of "the personal hygiene of women" which consists in birth control. Constant worry lest a premature conception take place is in itself enough to prevent many a woman from losing herself in

the exhilaration of the marital relation. Impractical or ill-timed contraceptive practices overshadow the desired climax of intercourse and give the woman little chance to enjoy the refreshing sleep that is her due. Any woman who gets less satisfaction than her husband does out of their marital relations cannot afford to delay in consulting a reputable physician—if possible a gynecologist or obstetrician—in regard to the details of her “personal hygiene,” to find out if she is blindly interfering with the regimen most conducive to a healthy sex life.

That wife may know her love life to be wholesome, who notices that instead of having to use all her will power to keep even-tempered in the face of annoyances, she sails calmly on through days that may be hard or easy but rarely have the power to upset her equanimity. Emotionally well balanced, she takes as trifles the untoward incidents of daily life, which, under other circumstances, would loom mountain-high and precipitate cloudbursts of bad temper.

No woman need distrust her ability to make satisfactory adjustments in her married love life, since open-mindedness and the desire to succeed are the two most important factors.

No marriage can be underwritten for success which is not based on the biologically wholesome expression of love between husband and wife, as well as on com-



munity of interests and staunchness of individual character. As sex adjustment insures freedom from personal tension, so a harmonious sex union smooths away the friction that occurs as two distinct personalities readjust their lives to fit each other's needs.

## VIII

### *Some Common Sex Problems of Marriage*

*The frequency of coitus.* There are those who have such a wrong idea concerning sex adjustment that when they come to the question of how much intercourse they should have, they seek from some authority instruction as fixed as the cookbook when it says that there must be so many cups of flour and sugar and water in the making of a batch of bread. This asking for a fixed schedule for coitus is about as great a mistake as could possibly be made, for it reveals that the adjustment is looked upon as something so mechanical that it can be given an unchanging formula. The facts are quite the other way. There is sexual excess and it is harmful; there is also, as some forget, sex deficiency, which likewise brings its bad consequences. To find the golden mean between two extremes always requires judgment, and this is

true of sex intercourse just as it is of everything else in the world.

It is in the first years of marriage that the temptation of excess is greatest. Linked with this question, How long has one been married? is the other, What are the ages of the two people who are attempting to make sensible adjustment? Sex activity is like any other in that young people have more vitality to express, and recuperate from muscular and nervous fatigue quicker than those who are older. The quantity of physical exercise that is desirable in the twenties may be for some extremely dangerous after forty. Although there cannot be any hard and fast rule about the amount of coitus desirable for persons at different ages, this fundamental variation between people must be kept in mind.

Then there is another difference between people which must not be forgotten if any reasonable program of sex adjustment is to be worked out. People differ in their sex desire and their sex needs just as they do along other lines. There is no such thing as a standard male or standard female in the sense that they all share a definite sex vigor. This peculiarity cannot be fully explained, but it has to be recognized. It is similar to the unexpected resistance that we find one organism showing in its fight against an infectious disease, as compared with the lesser fighting power of the body of another individual. It is

clear from experience that body vigor is not necessarily related to muscular development, and that a body vigorous in one respect is not always vigorous in all. It is useless to attempt to formulate a wise program for sex intercourse if this fundamental difference between individuals is ignored.

In the problem as it faces those who are married there must always be two sides. It is just this that makes sex happiness the product of adjustment. The man may be more vigorous than the woman or it may be the reverse. In such a case, as in other co-operative undertakings, the pace must for the most part be determined by him or her who has the lesser vigor and the weaker desire.

Another factor that is frequently left out of account is the manner of living of the individuals. It is a common observation that travel, for those unaccustomed to it, frequently leads to sex stimulation so that intercourse is desired when it might not have been in the normal order of things if the husband and wife had remained at home. This is just one illustration of the fact that the sort of experiences one has from day to day increases or decreases sex desire. In countless cases husbands who have been stimulated by some occurrence during the day, even when this has not been felt in consciousness at the time, return after the end of work with sex hunger that they would not have had if it were not for the

excitement they experienced. This frequently happens to the husband but seldom to the woman who is closely tied to household routine. We have here a basis for sex incompatibility that comes out of environmental contacts rather than actual differences between individuals. Of course, it is most important to recognize that these conditions that come from the manner of life of husband or wife may lead to excess and unreasonable desire when the circumstances of age, length of marriage, and physical condition are taken into account. The desire for intercourse is not itself a guarantee that coitus is beneficial, for it may be for one or the other an excess and contrary to his physical and mental welfare. Yet the influence of the manner of living cannot be left out of consideration, since it has such a decided effect upon the amount of coitus that is desired.

An illustration of the opposite sort is the bad effect of irritation and anxiety, born of trouble at the office for the man or responsibilities with children for the woman at home, so that the nervous system is not free to respond to coitus as frequently as it otherwise would. The question, how much coitus can be wisely had, must be decided in the light of all the facts that influence the mental and physical life of both the man and the woman.

The problem is even more complicated, since there are not only variations between individuals and cir-

cumstances, but each person varies from time to time both in his sex desire and in the amount of sex intercourse he can safely have without lowering his daily physical efficiency. In the case of animals we find an ebbing and flowing of sex vitality according to season, and this is considered true in less degree of men and women. At present differences from time to time in sex desire and vigor are largely accounted for by definite influences. One is general health. With apparent exceptions in the case of certain diseases, sex desire and need are in proportion to the general well-being of the body. Separation is another influence. After being apart for days or weeks the husband and wife usually have a marked temporary increase in sex desire. Men who accept professional strain or enter upon severe competition often notice a change in sex feeling, their desire sometimes being increased and sometimes disappearing until the normal order of things returns.

The most important changeableness, which, in spite of its meaning for the newly married, can be taken too seriously, is what is called the sex rhythm. This seems to be pronounced in the life of many women and in a milder form is characteristic of many men. With regard to this, as with many other things that concern wholesome sex life, there is not at present the carefully gathered information that is needed to give us certainty in regard to the facts.

Such evidence as we have tells us that in the case of many women, at least, there is considerable variation during the month in the amount of sex desire, and that if there be no interference with this over a long period of time there will be a tendency to have sex intercourse at stated times with reference to the periods of the monthly flow. This is not a definite law so that all women are alike, nor is it true that in the sex life of the individual woman who has a definite rhythm sex desire will always follow its usual rule. The trend usually is not so strong that it cannot easily be broken in upon by the influence of events, so that any experience that is particularly stimulating will bring sex craving to the surface and for the time being make the general rhythm of little significance. There has been too much dogmatism on the basis of a few individual reactions. For example, there is no evidence aside from individual cases that there is one time during the month when women are so keenly sexed that this is the only time they can have intercourse with maximum satisfaction. At present we have to be content, in estimating the strength of this monthly periodicity, with the opinions expressed by women who are asked for information. Such women have seldom kept any definite record over a long enough period of time to be absolutely reliable. Unfortunately, the asking of the question contributes suggestion. Apparently

some women assume that it is a part of normal sex life to have a noticeable monthly rhythm. Hamilton, in as careful a study as has yet been made, found that nineteen of the hundred women who gave him information had no periodicity of sex desire so far as they could discover,

Both the man and the woman are apt to find that their sex desire runs strongly for two or three days in succession. At least, though by no means a standard experience, this is relatively common. They wish, for example, to have intercourse two or three times within two or three days, and then for a considerable period, a week or more, they do not have any strong urge toward coitus. In any case it certainly is not a sensible adjustment to attempt a program of intercourse at a certain period of the month or after a definite duration of time; to have intercourse only according to the calendar or with such regularity as every third day is too arbitrary and mechanical to lead the majority of young men and women to as rich and wholesome a sex communion as they should achieve. Adjustment is not the same thing as adopting a schedule.

Every pleasure requires self-control, and there are those who overindulge in sex activity, just as there are people who eat too much. It would be a mistake, however, to think that proper regulation therefore consisted in a starvation diet. Too little sex activity



may be a distinct disadvantage for those who are being constantly stimulated by the everyday contacts of marriage. Every couple needs to find its own best program, which will represent neither excess nor severe deprivation in the long run for each of them.

People vary in the amount of sex intercourse they need, even more than in the quantities of food and sleep they require. The same individual varies markedly from time to time, according to age, health, and general activity. Desire is not always a true indication of need, since it may reflect outside happenings as well as inner want. Moreover, some people are prone to dwell upon their determination to try to satisfy their slightest inclination, while others strive to check their deepest yearnings.

When there is a great difference between husband and wife as to the quantity of sex activity they want, mutual adjustment is in order. He or she who is the more desirous can exercise self-restraint, especially by avoiding situations and lines of thought that bring stimulation. The less desirous one, meanwhile, can learn to recognize his or her milder indications of sex interest and develop responsiveness that may somewhat approach the mate's more impetuous sex urge. In the practical working out of a compromise, each can help the other, both by forgetting the self and by trying to understand the mate.

If a couple are much troubled by a persistent dis-

crepancy between their apparent sex needs, it is well to consult a urologist, gynecologist, psychiatrist or marriage counselor. Satisfactory adjustment can usually be made without the help of a specialist, but if that is necessary, there is no point in failing to get it.

Although there cannot be a definite statement regarding the amount of intercourse that is wise for all individuals under all circumstances, it is not so difficult as it may seem to discover through experience how much intercourse is desirable. Three tests can be made that will help any couple who are honestly trying to do what is best for them:

✓ First, does the desire arise spontaneously without any artificial stimulation?

✓ In the second place, wholesome coitus brings as its aftermath a pleasing relaxation. If, instead of this, one is left irritable, restless, depressed, or with a feeling of general debility, it is evident that something is wrong, and if intercourse has been frequent it is reasonable to suppose that the sufferer has been going to excess.

However, when it is the woman who is made irritable, restless, depressed or tired by intercourse, this reaction is more likely to mean that she has been stimulated but not satisfied. Either she did not have an orgasm, or it was only a superficial, clitoris orgasm and not a deep, vaginal one; or else she became excited again after having had one orgasm, but did

not the second time reach her climax, and therefore was left unsatisfied.

In the third place, normal, wholesome intercourse should bring feelings of vigor and self-confidence on the following day. Those who keep their eye upon the strength of the desire, relaxation and subsequent vitality, seldom go astray in their sexual program.

Most women do not care for intercourse during menstruation. The few who are especially desirous for it at that time may get special instructions from their physician or gynecologist as to the hygiene of intercourse during their periods.

In thinking of excess one must not merely consider the physical result. This is extremely important, since there are those who weaken their sex appetite by overindulgence. There are psychic characteristics that go with satisfactory intercourse, and if the experience be repeated until one is satiated it becomes little more than a physical act of meager pleasure. Those who overindulge are sure to have intercourse when they are not very eager for it. With feeble desire goes meagerness of satisfaction. This is likely to show itself in one's feeling and thought about coitus even before it is registered in the nervous structure itself. Indeed, it would not be far wrong to say that whenever coitus is accepted without much desire for it, it represents for the individual feebly interested an excess, which is bound to have some

influence in decreasing the value of the sex relationship.

One of the problems that trouble men is known as premature ejaculation. The discharge of sperm occurs almost immediately after the sex act starts, leaving both partners unsatisfied. This is usually due to nervousness and is most apt to happen during the early days of marriage. Although disappointing, it should not cause concern unless it persists. When it continues after the first weeks of marriage it results from physical or psychic causes which require the diagnosis and treatment of the physician or the psychiatrist. As a result of wrong information, or anxiety because of early licentiousness, there are those who in facing marriage ask the question whether or not they will be potent. It is rare that there is any lack of potency because of degeneration or malformation of physical structure. There may be, however, permanent or temporary impotency as a result of illness, drugs, especially alcohol, or the gradual breaking down of general health. During acute illness sex vigor generally recedes. Alcohol, in spite of releasing inhibition and seeming at first to stimulate, if it be taken in any quantity soon makes the sex act temporarily impossible for the man by its attack upon the nervous centers involved in intercourse. There are other drugs not so commonly used which also have power eventually to break down sex vigor.

It is the psychic side of impotency that concerns us most because this is generally the basis of trouble. The man who is very nervous for any cause finds intercourse difficult and frequently impossible. Disgust is an emotion which checks at once the reflex activity that makes it possible for the man to carry out the sex act; fear, whatever form it takes, also produces at the moment impotency for the man. When intercourse is being attempted under circumstances that create anxiety lest one be discovered, or if the conscience refuses to consent to the act, the man may find it impossible, in spite of his desires, to carry through intercourse.

At the beginning of marriage some men are so disturbed by the fear of hurting the wife in the initial intercourse, that they become temporarily impotent, or even form a habit of impotency. This anxiety of the newly-married man can often be lessened by information that removes the grounds for his fear. The woman's hymen should be examined before the marriage by a doctor who will treat it if that is advisable. Then, if the man understands the rôle of pre-coital love play in bringing the bride to readiness for the union, but also recognizes the fact that the first attempts at a conjugal embrace need not be any more complete than either partner wishes, he need have no fear of causing pain.

The least significant of all the various forms of

impotency is that which comes from temporary nervousness. This may be from any type of over-anxiety at the beginning of marriage. Patience on the part of the man and understanding on the part of the woman will usually soon remove this obstacle to married happiness. Perhaps the problem can best be summarized by saying that any form of emotional conflict that makes it difficult for the man to commit himself wholeheartedly to sex intercourse may make it impossible for the act to be carried out. If the man continues to be impotent for any length of time, the situation is more serious and medical or psychiatric advice should be sought without hesitation.

*Frigidity.* Frigidity in the woman is very like impotency in the man. It is, according to authorities, to be thought of as rare or common according to the way it is interpreted. As a biological fact it is, like impotency, very rare. Nature seldom inflicts structural defects in the sex equipment of either the man or woman. If frigidity in the woman is extremely rare as a biological fact, it is, on the other hand, not uncommon as a psychic experience. Since it makes little difference, so long as the condition exists, whether frigidity is a result of body defect or some mental cause, the predicament of many women is most unfortunate. When the causes of this misfortune are analyzed, it is found that frigidity results in the woman in much the same way that impotency does

in the man. It also is largely the product of emotional conflict.

One of the common causes of frigidity in woman is chronic disappointment because, although the woman is constantly stimulated, she is rarely satisfied by the husband. Failing to reach normal orgasm, the woman gradually learns to protect herself from disappointment by not entering wholeheartedly into the sex experience. This in time leads her to become frigid. Fear operates upon her in the same way that it does on the man. Hatred also may be carried over into the sex act, leading the woman to smother the feeling that naturally would be aroused, until by such a struggle she becomes frigid. Illness, by robbing her of necessary vitality, may make her frigid in the same manner that it makes the man impotent. Her attitude toward sex is more often the cause of trouble than it is in the case of the man, producing, as it does, emotional conflict which necessarily reduces her sex interest until it fades away.

The frigid woman may not always be without sex passion. Because of this, one has to add, frigidity is sometimes the result of the wrong man. Pathological literature is replete with cases of women who are frigid to their husbands, while under other circumstances they are extremely passionate. It is just this that reveals how deep-seated sex incompatibility can become in the unhappy marriage. It is in the psychic

by-products of sex that the maladjustments occur. From this love protects.

The temporary non-awakening of sex that is sometimes found in women who are newly married must not be mistaken for frigidity. The sex machinery does not start immediately, but this indifference will not ordinarily persist if the husband understands his rôle as a married lover who has the opportunity of awakening, by gentle sex dalliance, the dormant sex centers of his wife.

Frigidity means absence of sex desire and responsiveness in spite of appropriate situation and outside stimuli. If a woman remains apparently frigid, the first point of investigation should be whether some of the outside conditions and stimuli might be changed, with advantage. Information as to what the husband as well as the wife can do to give the unresponsive woman a better chance to develop her sex awareness can be obtained from the marriage counselor, medical specialist, or psychiatrist. Nobody should hesitate to ask for scientific advice in this matter, if improvement does not follow the couple's own efforts to help themselves. As in the case of impotency, a long-continued habit of failure tends to make improvement more difficult of attainment.

*Sterility.* Today it is becoming common knowledge that sterility calls not for resignation but for expert medical diagnosis and advice. It is estimated that



one out of every eight or nine couples fail to become parents, against their wish. Any couple who do not succeed in effecting conception within two years should consult a doctor, preferably a gynecologist or endocrinologist. Very few persons are absolutely sterile, but many have low fertility. In most of these relatively sterile persons a number of minor factors combine to lower the fertility. Many individuals never realize their own low fertility because they happen to be married to a man or woman of average or high fertility.

Both husband and wife need to have various diagnostic tests made when there is a question of relative infertility or possible sterility. This complete examination is not for the purpose of finding out who is to blame for the barrenness of their union, since in most cases a number of factors in each person are responsible. As in any other major undertaking, it is important to assay the total situation, as accurately as may be, in order to plan an effective combination of remedial measures.

In the rare cases in which it is seen that nothing can be done with any likelihood of improving the couple's fertility, that fact will be made known as soon as it is discovered and further expense avoided. The absolutely sterile couple might then wish to consider adopting a child, and perhaps later, another.

It is usually estimated that from 25 to 40 per

cent of childless couples respond to proper treatment by having one or more children. Generally several fertility-reducing factors have to be improved in each partner, to bring about such a change in their fertility.

One of the commonest of these sterility factors in the woman is the closing of the Fallopian tubes, as a result of either gonorrhea or a non-specific infection. A corresponding blocking of the man's tubes is much more rare, but harder to correct. The woman's tubes, in many cases, are readily reopened by simple treatment.

Infection of the cervix is another frequent fertility-reducing factor in the woman. This condition causes the cervical secretions to have an adverse effect on the semen. The condition can usually be corrected or circumvented. In the man infected secretions of the prostate and seminal vesicles rarely lower fertility by interfering with the power of the spermatozoa to move; the causative infection can usually be cured.

In a moderate proportion of childless wives, failure of the ovaries to produce normal ova causes sterility. A fair percentage of these women in the reproductive years respond to adequate treatment by becoming fertile. In about the same proportion of sterile husbands as of wives, there is serious failure to produce normal germ cells, but treatment is of little value; however, a large proportion of sterile hus-

bands show only minor deficiencies of spermatogenesis, and a fair percentage of these respond to appropriate treatment by becoming fertile.

Low thyroid function, hypothyroidism, is another common fertility-reducing factor in childless husbands and wives; in both it is readily improved by carefully supervised medical treatment, with a practical certainty of increasing the fertility.

Faulty delivery of the spermatozoa by the man is rare, and readily correctible. Faulty reception by the woman is less rare, but can be as readily circumvented.

Poor general health resulting from chronic diseases, undernutrition, or obesity may cause ovarian failure in the woman; in the man, poor general hygiene, acute illnesses with fever, as well as certain chemicals and drugs may also interfere with the seminal function of the testes. Too frequent sex intercourse may temporarily produce seminal failure. The quantity of semen might not seem to be lessened, even though its microscopic constituent, the spermatozoa, were mostly absent or defective. Repeated microscopic examination of fresh semen can reveal such a situation.

*The venereal diseases.* Gonorrhea, syphilis, and the other venereal diseases are of concern to married couples only if either the man or the woman has contracted one or more of these diseases before mar-

riage, or proceeds to do so after marriage. The person who has ever had sex intercourse with anyone besides the spouse must realize that he or she may also have picked up one of the venereal infections, and should therefore consult a good doctor or clinic promptly to find out when examinations can most fruitfully be made. If the person should prove to be diseased, he or she needs to report to the doctor or clinic for treatment regularly, according to schedule, until the case is dismissed.

Before marrying, the man and woman are required by law in many states, and by their conscience in all states, to be examined for syphilis. Examination for gonorrhea is equally important. If either of these, or any of the other venereal diseases, is active, the marriage should be postponed until the condition has been adequately treated for a long enough time to make it not infectious.

As it is possible to contract either gonorrhea or syphilis without sexual contact, everyone should get from their state board of health a pamphlet on the symptoms of these diseases, or read one of the recent books by reliable authorities giving a clear explanation of their symptoms and course. Nobody who suspects venereal infection in himself or herself should delay in consulting a competent doctor, since, in these as in other diseases, there often are no recognizable symptoms in the early stages, when treatment

is most effective. The doctor or clinic, however, can make laboratory tests to discover indications of disease.

*Pregnancy.* As soon as any couple decide to undertake a pregnancy, they should consult an obstetrician or gynecologist, to find out whether any major change has occurred in the wife's health since the premarriage examination and consultation, which might make it unwise for her at this time to try to carry the extra load of bearing a baby. Serious heart or kidney trouble and active tuberculosis are conditions which would make it advisable that parenthood be postponed or renounced. Other conditions might be discovered which would call for a similar decision. Less dangerous conditions might need to be remedied before allowing a pregnancy to begin.

Many couples find themselves prospective parents before they had intended to take on the added responsibility, due to their failure to obtain and make accurate use of the most suitable contraceptive information and appliances. Others are disappointed when conception does not occur as promptly as they had expected. Failure to effect conception immediately does not indicate low fertility, nor does unusually prompt conception prove exceptionally high fertility. Until the time of ovulation can be more accurately estimated in the individual woman, there is a large element of chance as to whether the couple will have

intercourse at a time when an ovum is ready to be fertilized. Moreover, too frequent intercourse may reduce temporarily the quality of the semen, thereby postponing the very event an overzealous couple may be trying to hasten.

It is important to recognize the probable signs of early pregnancy, in order to take proper care of the case. Menstruation usually stops and does not begin again until some weeks or months after the child is born, but in rare cases menstruation has continued throughout the entire nine months. Menstruation often stops for several months, due to some other cause, either physical or psychic. Such an occurrence should be reported to a gynecologist, that he may decide whether it is due to a condition needing treatment. *→ this must be cured & this is advisable for unmarried girls.* Swelling of the breasts and pigmentation of the nipple and the skin close to it may be observed. However, this may go unnoticed, or confusion may arise because of the enlargement of the breasts that may accompany the beginning of sexual activity in marriage.

A tendency to nausea, commonly known as "morning sickness," may occur soon after the first menstrual period is missed, but a considerable proportion of women never have this symptom; in some women it may arise from a different cause, but be misinter-

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puted as a sign of pregnancy. It can usually be alleviated by dietary and other measures.

Other indications of pregnancy can be discovered by the examining physician, but even he cannot be positive until he hears the fetal heartbeat, in the eighteenth or twentieth week. Fortunately, though, he can have a laboratory test made, as early as two weeks after conception, which will give reliable information as to whether the woman is pregnant. This Aschheim-Zondek test, or the Friedman, or one of its other modifications, would be of value in case it was especially important to find out quickly whether a woman was pregnant.

The doctor who takes charge of a pregnancy will need to make a thorough examination at the time of the first visit, and take the patient's personal and family history, as far as this may have any bearing on her pregnancy. Heart, lung and kidney tests will be made, and blood tests for anemia and other conditions, and also for syphilis. The height and weight will be recorded, and the external and internal measurements of the pelvis taken. Treatment for anemia or any other condition requiring attention will be begun, and the woman will be instructed in the hygiene of pregnancy. She will be required to report for follow-up examinations and further advice, suitable to the different stages of the pregnancy, at least

once a month during the first six months, and then more often.

The modern husband also consults the doctor to get any insight he may need that will help him to co-operate with his wife in managing their joint responsibility for her condition and the new life that has begun. Both husband and wife need to be alert to report anything they do not understand, as this is the best way to guard against serious complications.

The doctor will make a vaginal examination about six weeks after the childbirth, to find out if there is any condition that needs treatment, in order that the woman may continue to have good pelvic health. Long before this, he may prescribe exercises to restore the muscle tone of vagina and pelvic floor.

*Intercourse during pregnancy.* The question whether husband and wife shall continue coitus during pregnancy is sure to arise, and the best thing is to seek the doctor's advice and follow it carefully. He is likely to permit intercourse unless there is special risk of miscarriage or evidence that it is harmful to the woman. In some women sex passion is greatly lessened during the second half of pregnancy. The doctor will advise the couple to be extremely careful, during the later months, (using a side position) and observing scrupulous cleanliness, in order not to injure the growing fetus or infect the birth canal, and refraining altogether from intercourse during the last

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six or eight weeks before childbirth and a similar period afterward. He also will advise against intercourse during the period of the month when the woman would be normally going through menstruation. At that particular time sex intercourse is more likely to cause miscarriage or premature delivery.

The one thing that needs to be kept in mind is that the doctor may not only be asked for advice, but if any suspicious change occurs he must be told, so that with the knowledge of the new situation he can again advise free or moderate intercourse, or abstinence.

In this problem, as in every other that arises during pregnancy, the informed husband will want to take his share of responsibility. He will not want to run any risk of interrupting the pregnancy or infecting the birth canal in order to make his sex life easier. The husband must be prepared for nervous changes and emotional instability, for, unfortunately, some women suffer along these lines during a part or all of pregnancy.

With the coming of the child, the problem ceases to be one of sex and becomes that of parenthood, but the husband may wisely remember that the subsequent sex life may be greatly influenced by what happens during and after confinement. If the woman's sex life is to continue to be vigorous and satisfying, everything possible needs to be done to make the confinement as normal as it can be, that

the coming of the child may not cause any decrease in the wife's sex passion. When this regard for the woman's welfare is carried into practice it is found that during the month of her return from the hospital after the birth of the child, the husband should give her assistance in caring for the baby, especially at night, as well as arranging for the needed household help by day. Otherwise the burden may be so heavy that the wife's return to normal life is slower than it ought to be and there may be memories of her experience that will make her reluctant to be a mother again, or will take from her the confidence that she previously had in her husband's unselfish love. If affection ever needs to prove itself, it is during the time when the wife carries the child, when with risk and suffering she brings it into life, and when she undertakes its care shortly after passing through the ordeal of childbirth. It is at these times that the thoughtless husband may easily lose his wife's love and with it their previous wholesome sex adjustment.

## IX

### *Planned Parenthood*

Nothing better illustrates the change that has come regarding birth control than the fact that no book dealing with sex can leave the subject out of its contents. Whether one favors or disapproves birth control, it can no longer be ignored. Perhaps the most satisfactory way to deal with the subject in this discussion is to answer the questions that the newly married are likely to ask.

First, What is birth control? The term birth control carries a wrong impression. By those who are not thoroughly acquainted with the facts as they now are, it is supposed that science has at last got control of conditions that lead to pregnancy, so that those who have intercourse can decide whether or not to have children, with the certainty that their decision is final. As a matter of fact this is not true. What we now have is birth limitation rather than complete

control, since every little while some one who trusted a common method of birth control finds herself pregnant.

It is, of course, true that certain methods are less hazardous than others, but it is too much to claim that as yet science has complete control, so that no one need fear becoming pregnant unless this is her choice. Birth control in this more limited sense of contraceptives is not new. We find that even among savage tribes there have been efforts to prevent conception, some of which were in a measure successful. The difference now is that the methods of birth control have become more efficient and are widely known. Not long ago birth control practices were confined to the professional and wealthy groups, but now birth control has become known to all groups and is practiced by individuals in the poorest class as well as the wealthiest. In some countries training in birth control practices has become a public policy, while in others, for longer or shorter periods, the laws against any kind of birth control have been especially severe.

Second, Is it wrong to practice birth control? To some birth control in any form seems immoral, usually because such practices seem to be contrary to religious teaching; others regard knowledge of birth control as the most promising of all social changes and consider any legislation that attempts to limit knowledge of birth control a great social wrong, as

well as an injustice to the individuals who need information. In such a controversy each person must make his own decision, but for wholesome sex life it is of the utmost importance that if birth control practices be carried on it shall be as the result of an ethical decision, so that conscience will not oppose sex when contraceptive methods are used. There are those who do not think it wrong to limit the coming of children, provided it is done by abstinence from intercourse, but believe birth control by the use of contraceptives a sin. They recognize the strain involved in such a domestic policy as abstinence, but regard any other birth control method as immoral.

There are others who believe in birth control for certain classes, in which of course they themselves are placed, but regard it highly undesirable that the great mass of people, especially the working classes, should discover effective means of controlling birth. There are still others who regard the coming of birth control as one of the great scientific achievements which will bring happiness or woe according to the use made of it; while there are yet others who appear to think that the mere popularizing of birth control is the one great social need of our time, and who find it difficult to recognize that any evil can come from the extension of birth control knowledge.

The newly married can hardly escape in these times facing squarely what their policy is going to

be and why. Here, as elsewhere, the desires and beliefs of both parties must be taken into account. It would surely be unfair for either husband or wife, without regard for the thought of the other, to take command and decide the policy regarding contraceptives without any consideration of the other's feeling or thought. But it does seem just to recognize that the woman is more involved than the man in pregnancy and also later in the nurture of children, so that she should have a larger voice in the discussion than the man.

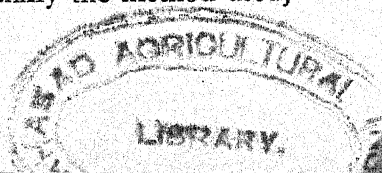
Third, Are birth control practices harmful? This question generally involves two different sorts of interests. In one the thought is with reference to the physical harm or harmlessness of birth control methods; the other attempts to estimate the social influence of birth control as seen in the individuals who practice it, their family life, and the great society round about.

In regard to the physical results of birth control practices there is now considerable knowledge. The effects depend on the type of method used. Some of the older methods, not advised nowadays by any reputable doctor or clinic, were distinctly harmful.

Modern contraceptive methods that are advised by reliable doctors or clinics are not only harmless when used under supervision, but the necessary examinations of the woman have preventive value,

from a health standpoint, by leading to early diagnosis of certain existing or developing conditions which might otherwise go unnoticed until too late for them to be effectively treated. Whether or not they have ever used contraceptives, or even had sex intercourse, all women should faithfully have a vaginal examination made, regularly, at least every six or twelve months, to detect cancer of the cervix in its earliest stages when it can be effectively treated. Men should have a corresponding examination of the prostate, to detect cancer in its early stages.

The question of the effect of contraceptives on fertility has been clarified in recent years. Scientifically approved and supervised contraceptives are understood not to lessen the power to reproduce. But any couple of low fertility, who either marry very late, or after marriage put off their first attempts at bringing about conception until their years of highest fertility have gone by, may then find that they can no longer become parents. Each couple should get the opinion of a gynecologist or other competent doctor as to the probable outcome of their postponing parenthood beyond the decade of greatest fertility, which seems to be, for the woman at least, the years from twenty to twenty-nine. If there be any worry about the use of a definite contraceptive method on account of its possible effect upon fertility one should consult the doctor, stating frankly the method used,



and let him pass judgment upon whether or not harm is likely to occur and whether there is any risk of losing fertility.

The question whether it is harmful to practice birth control is asked by some who are interested primarily in its moral and social results. So far as the individual is concerned, if birth control seems wrong its practice necessarily has the same effect on conscience that comes from doing anything that is interpreted as evil. If one is not content to follow mere feeling, which, of course, is explained by one's early training, the question then becomes one of fact. Does or does not the practice of birth control hurt the moral character of those who make use of contraceptive methods? This, of course, is the rational way of settling the controversy.

Any one who is acquainted with the discussions *pro* and *con* birth control will come across arguments against contraception, based on the assertion that the knowledge of birth control is leading to an increase in sex intercourse among the unmarried. Although this problem is pertinent in the discussion of birth control in general, it is not an essential part of this present discussion, which is concerned with birth control as a problem for the married. To ignore it at this point, however, would seem to some readers an evading of a part of the problem as to whether birth control is socially harmful. There are



naturally no reliable statistics that prove whether or not the popularizing of birth control has caused an increase in illicit intercourse. One has to pass judgment upon the basis of such facts as one does have.

Although this matter of a changing code among young people can be, and in our belief is, exaggerated, our own opinion, which we express frankly but with no sense of dogmatism, is that birth control is influencing the sex code toward greater freedom among young people to a degree that sooner or later is bound to influence marriage. Elsewhere, especially in *The Marriage Crisis*, one of the authors has considered this problem. In the present chapter birth control is not considered in the larger social viewpoint, but with reference to its influence upon wholesome sex life in marriage.

Fourth, Is contraception successful? This is a pertinent question and one that is sure to arise whenever birth control is not taboo. We have evidence that throws light on this question, but we do not have the certainty that the questioner would like. A great many men and women in this country practice birth control in some form or other, but naturally most of them do not report success or failure in a statistical form that permits us to estimate the efficiency of the great mass of those who are using contraception. We have to depend upon the answers

that have been made in the few investigations carried on by specialists interested in the problem, and upon the reports made by some of the birth control clinics that keep careful records of their services. It is obvious that on account of the difficulty of getting information regarding contraception there are many who practice birth control with assurance but without the knowledge that justifies confidence. They rely on some method until it fails or until by some means they obtain knowledge of a better way. Thus a great deal of birth control is experimental and bound to have a great degree of failure.

The idea of birth control is widespread, but familiarity with the best methods of contraception is still limited to favored individuals. It follows that there are a considerable number of unwelcomed pregnancies, a most important fact for the unmarried who seek sex freedom to remember. It is also true that if birth control methods could be as freely discussed as the subject itself, the proper methods of contraception would be more generally known and the records of success increased. This does not mean that clinics always advise the same birth control method for all their clients, for individual needs and differences have to be recognized in contraception as in everything else, but it is true that certain methods are more successful than others and

that the clinics never advise some methods widely practiced by those who have only hearsay information.

Science has not, in the opinion of many, yet developed a perfectly satisfactory method of contraception. It has been greatly hampered, especially in the United States, by religious opposition to birth control and by restrictive legislation. The progress that has been made in the efficiency of contraception in spite of these great obstacles makes it unsafe to assert that perfect birth control cannot be achieved.

The reader of this book, however, is interested in the fact that the records at present show that those who do use contraceptive precautions do not meet with the complete success that they desire. Dr. Hamilton's *Research in Marriage* is the study of a sophisticated group of frank husbands and wives. Their statements with reference to contraception reveal the experiences of an especially favored group. One of his questions was whether or not the people studied had always had a safe way of avoiding pregnancy. 11 men and 10 women were uncertain. Only 31 men and 37 women of the 100 men and 100 women said without reservation that they had always had a safe contraceptive method.

Fifth, What are the motives of birth control? Doubtless the most common motive comes from the

desire to have the pleasure of sex intercourse without the risk of pregnancy. Along every line man has enriched his experience by controlling conditions of nature so as to increase his comforts and his satisfactions. Birth control represents another effort by man to use artifice as a means of getting more pleasure than if there were no control of our natural processes. The pleasure philosophy of life has been encouraged by the advance of science. The practice of contraceptives is one of its expressions. It permits the separation of sex from reproduction, so that there may be a great deal more sex intercourse than would be possible without frequent pregnancy for all except those who are unnaturally sterile.

Another motive is a motive of health which is recognized by legal justification of the use of contraceptives in some of our states. There are people who cannot have children without running the risk of death, for example, a woman who suffers from serious heart trouble. There are others who are chronically ill or who have a morbid family history so that the birth of a child is not justified. People who have tuberculosis or a serious family history of mental disease are examples of those who claim that they ought not to have children, but should not be denied the pleasures of sex and marriage.

Another very common reason for birth control, especially in the early years of marriage, is the eco-

conomic motive. Those who use contraceptive methods on account of economic pressure usually look forward eventually to having children. In some cases at least the possibility of birth control encourages a delay of parenthood with the expectation that this temporary policy will be given up as soon as economic circumstances become easier. In the case of a person starting a profession there is a special temptation to avoid having children, when it seems as if the coming of a child would make impossible the preparation that the profession requires.

Nevertheless, it is a matter of experience that many who finally wish children fail ever to become parents on account of their low fertility. Some types of deficient fertility are due to conditions that were not present in the early years of maturity. For instance, long-continued malnutrition, the excessive use of tobacco or alcohol, chronic constipation, lack of exercise, and overfatigue from living under too much pressure are factors that in some individuals do not arise until middle life. Many diseases, also, such as mumps, other fevers, and constitutional diseases that impair fertility may not happen to occur during the first decade of maturity.

When infertility is occasioned by poor sex development, requiring endocrine treatment, the sooner the diagnosis is made and appropriate treatment begun, the more effective it is. Therefore, it is an advantage

for a couple to find out their status in this respect, without waiting until they are finally ready to have children.

P.N. Dyer  
31.30 P.M.  
for girls  
who are  
going to  
be wives

Recent studies indicate that the woman's best years for childbearing are in the age-period from twenty to twenty-nine. Not only does pregnancy tend to proceed more smoothly, but childbirth has a somewhat higher rate of safety than in the next decade, or in the preceding five years. Abnormalities of the offspring are also less common among the children of mothers who are under thirty years of age at the time of childbirth.

Another motive for contraception is the desire to space the coming of children so that one will not follow another too closely. For the sake of the health of the child, as well as for the maintenance of the mother's health, doctors generally advise against the wife's starting another pregnancy for at least two years after each childbirth. It is also true that the modern woman cannot be merely a mother of children; many demands are put upon her, and successful sex life requires that she keep alert in ways that make it possible for her to be a good companion to her husband. The use of contraception makes this program much easier to carry out than before the vogue of birth control.

Knowledge of contraception has now become so widespread in America in all classes that the prob-

lem whether or not concrete advice shall be given is more significant than it once was. It is no longer a question whether the people shall be told that there are methods that give considerable control of conception, but rather, Shall they be told specifically the best that science knows regarding contraceptive methods? It at least needs to be known that at present there is no contraceptive method that does not involve the risk of an unsought pregnancy. The very fact that birth control has become so well known, while at the same time there is less appreciation of the care necessary in its technique to avoid failure, encourages some unmarried young people to run risk of an unwanted pregnancy when, if they knew the true state of affairs, many of these young men and women would not accept the danger of their sex code, but would seriously turn their faces toward legal marriage.

*Sex and Life*

Much has been said in this book about sex pleasure and the opportunity the newly married have to make sex a source of abounding satisfaction. Such counsel is in accord with the normal impulses of those who are about to enter marriage or who are tasting its fruits in the springtime of matrimony. It is not at all strange that young people starting marriage should have such keen interest in its physical aspects. There should be no feeling of shame because of this concern in sex. If it were not present, the onlooker familiar with human experience would have misgivings as he saw the unawakened individual or the person devoid of sex motives entering matrimony.

Important as sex in its physical aspects is, this is not the whole story. Sex, like everything else in life, can be taken narrowly and superficially or broadly



and made to yield all that it has to give. It is so easy to become victimized by physical sex that all counselors of youth stress the dangers of sex selfishness. He who enters sex experience always goes to judgment, his very soul laid bare, and the test is exceedingly simple in the form it takes. If there be any element of indifference to the other person's welfare, if sex be something snatched for personal pleasure with no regard to the effect it has upon the other, then he who abuses his opportunity restricts his sex pleasures to those possible on the lower level. Nothing in life offers greater ease of exploitation than does sex. Since it is by nature a mutual experience, it is good only when it is beneficial and pleasure-giving to both individuals. By being indifferent to the partner any one can make it a self-confined activity that immediately loses its flavor. The danger of sex exploitation must not be thought confined to the unmarried, for matrimony is devoid of any magic power to turn a self-seeker into a lover and make sex supremely coöperative. Of course, we naturally think of prostitution whenever the idea of exploiting sex comes to mind. This is because of our repugnance to the very thought of selling what no right feeling person could bear to commercialize, and our realization that the willingness to traffic in sex intimacy shows how terribly the inner life of the prostitute has been mutilated. If she sought

vengeance for her tragedy she would need to do nothing more than she accomplishes when she trains the male who buys her service to think of sex as something that can be satisfactorily had without its being accompanied by mutual regard and affection.

Important as it is, therefore, to make sex prominent in early marriage, a matrimonial experience cannot be wholesome if it be built merely upon mutual body attraction. With the wear and tear of life such a marriage crumbles, because it has insufficient substance. It cannot develop from its early beginnings because it has no inner vigor to make growth possible. Marriage under such circumstances is a mere legalizing of sex intercourse, precarious because of the thinness of the common interest of the husband and wife.

When we look at sex on a higher level than merely a pleasure-giving appetite we discover that it may have a large place in wholesome development of personality. To achieve an affection that brings one in the closest contact possible for humans, sex intercourse, is to go onward in life according to the natural order. To bring this out in clearness one need only notice the tragedy faced by those who never have opportunity to achieve this experience or are too ill-prepared when it comes to them to make good use of it. Those who for any

motive go through life unacquainted through personal experience with the delight of a successful matrimonial union built upon affection suffer loss of a human need inferior to no other.

It is not strange that the protest against this deprivation should be so strong as to lead some to think of sex fulfillment during the earthly career as a right which the individual should be expected to claim. Unfortunately it makes no difference what one demands, there is no method by which love can be furnished to those who come claiming their rights. It would be easy, of course, by merely revising the moral code that has developed to protect sex values, to invite promiscuity, but this would only make it all the clearer that the tragedy is not in the mere denying of physical experience of sex, but in the failure to achieve affection and to incorporate physical sex as an instrument of love.

It is hardly fair, therefore, to think of those who do not marry, but who if they met the right man or woman would eagerly enter matrimony, as martyrs to the prevailing sex code. The tragedy goes down deeper into the very essence of life. The real value of every human experience comes out most clearly when we see the meaning of its being denied. This is true of health, of education, of social achievement, but of nothing is it more true than of marriage. If society were more concerned with the sacrifice of

those who should but do not marry, men and women would be so trained that the tragedy of the single life would come more often to those who have little to give in matrimony and who want little, rather than to those who have much to give and whose needs are great.

Human nature never shows itself more conscientious or more sacrificing than when deliberately and without bitterness the single life is accepted in order that service may be rendered which marriage would prohibit, or when wedlock is refused because of personal health or family history, but the maintenance of the single life for these high motives never reveals fully the tragedy of the unmarried. There are a multitude of women who, were their sex appetites early awakened and their deepest human desire to marry faced squarely before they are temporarily captivated by lesser interests, would marry with more promise than many of those whose precocious expression of sex and concentration upon the getting of a mate brings them to the wedding altar. It is true that there are compensations, that all the joys of life do not issue from a normal sex experience. Nevertheless, and here is the heart of the problem, for the healthy man or woman wholesome marriage proves good for body and for mind, giving both members of the union an intense and bene-

ficial pleasure and the richest comradeship possible.

So much has been necessarily said thus far concerning the individual and his sex life that the reader may suppose that there is no other meaning to sex. Nothing could be more unfortunate. Because sex means much to the individual it also has a social significance, second to nothing else in life. In addition to this there are certain social aspects of sex altogether independent of the individuals who through it obtain mutual satisfaction. Thus sex has both a personal and a social aspect and there has never been, so far as we know, any human society that has been utterly indifferent to the social meaning of sex experience. Indeed, sex has had such social consequences that its regulation has become one of the great necessities whenever any group of men and women have lived together. More than this is true. We can trace from the early beginnings of social life the great fear that was felt regarding sex on account of the power it had to influence human conduct.

Part of this fear has centered about the risk of undesired children for whom there would be no responsible father. This is not the only reason that has led society to guard, by taboo and by law, sex relationship. Because of its impetuous nature and the opportunity it offers for exploitation, sex needs self-

control and a sense of social responsibility. This cannot be assumed of all individuals, and therefore the group has always had to take in hand the regulation of sex conduct, sometimes loosely, sometimes minutely, but always with great strictness at the point where it believed individual sex practices endangered the social good. As we look backward to savage experiences we recognize that many of these notions were foolish, based upon ignorance of biology, a misinterpretation of the laws of heredity, or ignorance regarding reproduction, but, however wrong the form of the regulation, some control has always been exercised.

In our time great changes have come and seem to be coming with reference to various aspects of sex. In part this is due to the passing of fear of illegitimacy as birth control practices become more widely known and assurance of their reliability grows stronger. It does not seem reasonable to charge all the changes to this one important departure from the past, since sex regulation is always influenced by social conditions and they are now changing in so many ways that it would be impossible for sex not to be affected. It is felt by those fearful of the consequences of our sex transition that the end of the present trend is to be sex individualism carried to the utmost. Welcomed by some, this to others appears the greatest of all social catastrophes.

There is not the slightest reason to suppose that any society will tolerate absolute individualism in sex. Regulation has always come primarily from public opinion and from legislation. Of these the former is much the more important. Under any social situation selfishness in sex will intrude and sooner or later its consequences will force public opinion to recognize dangers and to protect as far as possible, by standards and codes, the greater good of the group as a whole.

If the thinking and feeling of people were in our time moving backward toward more and more physical sex satisfaction with less and less concern for affection, a code of conduct might issue that would be less exacting in its attempt to curb sex selfishness and exploitation. But the momentum of life is in the opposite direction. Indeed, so strongly does the current move that there has already arrived a separation in the code itself, leading on the part of some to considerable liberality in physical sex by itself, so long as it does not include a love relationship. Out of experience, again, the lesson is being learned that these two aspects of sex cannot be kept separate, that what happens on the lower level sooner or later has consequences for the upper.

However differently people interpret the loosening of the former ethical code of controlling sex, there should be rather general agreement that there

are evidences already at hand which indicate that this movement is not to end in the elimination of social control of sex conduct, but rather in the reconstructing of public opinion to adapt it to modern needs and the changing circumstances of our ways of living, by bringing in more exacting standards rather than sex license. As contraception removes some of the prudential motives that in the past have regulated conduct, this will invite selfishness to attack wholesome sex life by attempting substitutes for affection. Just as soon and just as clearly as this is generally recognized, public opinion will respond by frowning upon irresponsible, selfish pleasure-seeking in sex.

It would be a most unfortunate start of marriage for any one to suppose that the legislation that safeguards marriage has been inflicted upon human nature by powerful overlords for the motive of killing joy. From human experience comes this demand that sex be socially recognized by the institution of marriage. Legislation is always sensitive to the influences of contemporary life, and changes from time to time in the attempt to adapt itself more thoroughly to human needs. Its purpose in our time is to provide affection with the commitment and security it craves.

In a recent letter a friend who has the habit of sounding life at its depths writes that for a time it



seemed as if sex as she experienced it in her marriage could offer the complete fulfillment of life that thoughtful people have always been asking for, but that with the passing of time sex also seems partial and incomplete. This she describes as the "illusiveness of sex." It happens that in her matrimonial career sex is passing from the large place it formerly held to a minor position, and affection, as expressed in the fellowship of mind and work, has taken the van. Such an experience can be viewed as an illustration of the failure or limitation of physical sex, which lacks the resources to grow in meaning with individual development. From this point of view sex is much like the color or fragrance of the flowers that attract bees, merely that by this process fertilization and reproduction of plant life may go on. There are famous writers who have voiced their protest against the illusive quality of sex and the disappointment it finally brought. For them sex is a sort of tricky net in which nature attempts to catch those it wishes to perpetuate the race. Pleasure is present, but this is incidental. In time the individual awakens to the fact that he has been used by nature, even when he supposed that he was merely satisfying himself. This is indeed true, but only on the lower levels of physical sex.

No one gets very near to the deeper meaning of sex unless he sees that man has enlarged what at

first was merely a means of reproduction and made out of physical attraction a craving and a satisfaction which reflect better than anything else what we call human in contrast with the merely animal. Sex has been so multiplied, so intensified, and so enriched that it is impossible for physical intercourse by itself to yield what the imagination anticipates from it. It fails because human desire has outrun it. In this sense sex by itself is a small thing, not because it is more meager in human experience in our period of time than it has been earlier in human history or in the simpler experience of the animal. Even physical sex has been enlarged so that it is more pleasure-giving than it ever has been. In spite of this, mere physical sex is a small thing when it stands by itself, in comparison with its values when incorporated in that intensity of personal relationship which we call love or affection. As a means of reproduction one sort of intercourse is as significant as another; when thought of as a means of human satisfaction, the contrast between physical sex in its narrowest terms and sex as a part of the communion of the husband and wife in affection is greater than any other human achievement that may be compared with mere animal endowment.

For many centuries social coercion has been more strongly directed against the sex conduct of women than of men. Whether this accounts for the greater

significance of affection in the sex life of women than of men no one knows. It is fair to assume that the freedom that men have had to seek physical satisfaction under conditions, as in prostitution, where there was no intimate relation of sympathy or regard, has led to a slower development in their love life. Of course it is true that many writers express mere sentiment in their discussion of the love needs of women. Putting that all aside as of no consequence to us, no one can know many marriage tragedies or have even a reading knowledge of psychoanalytic literature without coming to feel that the great majority of women crave affection in a sex commitment beyond any other longing, and that being deprived of love creates in their innermost life a void which nothing else completely fills. This conclusion comes, of course, not from what they say but from actually observing the restlessness, the discontent, the bitterness, and the emotional instability clearly tied up to an emptiness of life because love has not come to them.

Nothing is more illuminating as to the root of the trouble than the attempts that are made to interpret this need as merely a body demand for physical sex intercourse, because it is thought the pleasures of sex can remove from consciousness the craving for affection. Whenever women of strong sex feeling turn aside from their major quest and accept

the counsel that leads them to go to physical sex for relief, they soon either develop affection for the man with whom they are intimate, or the disillusionment of sex without affection makes them feel more strongly than ever the losses from which they suffer.

It is true that sex is such a normal experience for healthy men and women that the body itself protests against celibacy, but experience demonstrates that this cannot be thought of as the essential problem of the woman who craves love. If she narrows her love demands so that satisfaction can be promised on the mere level of physical sex, she generally repudiates her acceptance of the lesser gift and in the end her protest against a life without love becomes all the stronger. The difference between men and women at this point can easily be exaggerated. At best the generalization is a clumsy one, for there are great differences between men and men, and between women and women. The well-developed male personality is doubtless not at all different from the female in finding that mere physical sex cannot fulfill the needs of love.

The meaning of this to those who marry is that sex cannot be wholesome unless in it is included that deeper feeling which makes both the man and woman cleave only unto each other. It is only when affection takes command that we have wholesome sex life. This consolidation of physical sex with the

most intimate fellowship of feeling and thought is the mark of a true marriage. The difference between sex separated from affection and an affection that includes sex appears in every act of coitus. The distinction is simple but subtle in its meaning. He who is content with mere sex thinks of taking something from the other. With that spirit he comes to the act of coitus. He who is expressing love as well as having sex pleasure enters the intimacy with the attitude of one doing something with the other. In the former experience one individual becomes the mere instrument of pleasure for the other. In the love-controlled coitus, fellowship rather than subordination gives quality to the experience.

The living together of husband and wife who have completely consolidated affection and sex is in all its various aspects enriched by love. It is this that makes the difference between a home, where intimacy ranges over the entire field of human relationships, and a mere refuge for the privacy required to carry on sex intercourse. The sex act partakes of the atmosphere that surrounds it and is never at its best outside the fellowship that makes a home. Sex harmony radiates into the home and mutual sympathy increases the satisfactions of intercourse.

Although for the sake of clarity in this discussion distinction has to be made between sex and reproduction, there is need now to recognize that inter-

course and parenthood have been linked together by nature itself and we must not forget their alliance. In the past, parenthood has been taken for granted by those who have consciously realized the meaning of marriage. In our times there is temptation to regard parenthood as a limitation of sex pleasure and to feel that in so far as sex satisfaction can be had without involving parenthood we have stolen a march on nature and got more than she bargained for. Parenthood is wrongly thought of as a rival of sex pleasure or a penalty put upon those who marry. Like wholesome sex life, it is also fulfillment of human need. It is true that nature has to depend upon sex intercourse as a means of keeping the race alive, but it is equally true for great multitudes of men and women that they need for their best development the coming of children, just as surely as nature needs their coöperation for the perpetuation of the race.

Any one experienced in dealing with human behavior knows that the showering of affection upon the child is sometimes used as a substitute for intimacies that belong to the relationship of husband and wife, but this does not happen where wholesome sex has been achieved. It is also a great error to suppose that the child's coming permanently draws out from the intimacy of husband and wife some of the love capital which they had gathered for their

domestic undertaking. The child does not subtract affection, he multiplies it, by giving both father and mother a deeper basis of understanding and a more solid sympathy. The married couple must see clearly the risk of trying to prevent sex from following its natural course, leading to parenthood. The over-cautious and the selfish always suffer losses. This is true in matrimony as it is elsewhere. It may seem easier without children, until the full need of the normal man and woman is plumbed to its bottom. When this is done the great majority of husbands and wives will add to their satisfactions as love-mates if also they become fathers and mothers. Although one should not seek children because of one's emptiness of life, in parenthood one increases personal experience, enriching every sort of worthy satisfaction, and at the same time one also lives in the life of the child. Thus the parent if he wills it has a double grip upon life that comes to him through his own experience and also through that of his children.

In a former chapter emphasis was laid upon the seasonal character of sex. In the earlier years it runs at full vigor, so that at the commencement of marriage it occupies a prominent place in fellowship. With the oncoming of years the fund of common interests increases and sex no longer holds the chief place in the relationship of husband and wife. If

parenthood in due time appears it also adds another tie that holds closer together the man and the woman.

In any case, time itself makes decisive changes in the sex life of men and women. By the mere passing of years, both the man and woman eventually are brought to that period of their lives in which sex desire and activity gradually diminish. The decline of sex interest and need does not correspond with the end of the reproductive period, known as the climacteric or "change of life" in both men and women, but usually comes later as a part of the general picture of aging.

In the woman the menopause, or end of the menstrual function, marks the inability of the ovaries to produce any more ova. However, it is not safe to decide that because menstruation has stopped for a few months, it may not recur. Some of the pregnancies that occur in women in later middle life are due to the assumption that they are no longer fertile, because they have skipped two or three months. Late pregnancies are often welcomed, but in some cases they have to be carefully avoided because of serious heart or kidney conditions.

On the other hand, the woman whose monthly periods have apparently come to an end, only to seem to start up again later, must not delay in getting a cervical examination to rule out some pathological condition, which might be causing bleeding which she



misinterprets as a menstrual discharge. Failure to take this precaution gives an occasional case of cancer a chance to gain dangerous headway before it is detected and treated.

The vast majority of women go through the climacteric, between the ages of forty-five and fifty, without any distressing symptoms, and continue to enjoy excellent health for many years before the processes of aging affect them. In a small percentage of women complications may arise during the period of the climacteric, but these are primarily due to other causes, some of which call for treatment. Nothing should be ignored just because it happens to occur in a climacteric woman. Even minor discomforts can often be alleviated safely under conservative medical supervision.

In the man the climacteric generally comes later and is less noticeable, since it is marked only by failure to produce spermatozoa, without any grossly obvious change in the discharge of semen. It is not easy to tell just when a man has left the reproductive period behind, since microscopic examination of his semen would show a different situation at different times, according to his general health and degree of recent continence.

Where there has been wholesome fellowship and life has been enriched as man and wife have gone on hand in hand, the climacteric and the decades of

vigorous well-being that follow it may be reckoned among the enjoyable epochs of the marriage. If the couple had their children in the early part of their own maturity, they now are able to begin to live in a more leisurely way, no longer spurred on by heavy financial responsibilities.

Those husbands and wives who have made mutually satisfying sex adjustments in each successive phase of their marriage will continue to be able to achieve a wholesome sex life as long as they have any interest in this part of their association. Looking back on their earlier experiences, they will realize that whenever adjustment seemed difficult, their attempts to solve the problem finally resulted in a more rewarding adjustment than they had yet made.

## *Books Suggested for Additional Reading*

### SEX EDUCATION:

*Sex in Childhood.* Ernest R. Groves and Gladys Hoagland Groves. Emerson Books, Inc. New York. Information for parents on the sex development and education of their children from birth to adolescence.

### MARITAL ADJUSTMENT:

*The Married Woman.* Gladys Hoagland Groves and Robert A. Ross, M.D. Blue Ribbon Books, Inc. New York. A practical guide to happy marriage.

*The Man Takes a Wife: A Study of Man's Problems in and through Marriage.* Ira S. Wile, M.D. Emerson Books, Inc. New York.

### VENEREAL DISEASES:

*On Your Guard!* Carl Warren, M.S.J. Emerson Books, Inc. New York. Prevention and treatment of the venereal diseases.

### STERILITY:

*Facts for Childless Couples.* E. C. Hamblen, M.D. Charles C. Thomas, Publisher. Springfield, Illinois. Help for those who wish to become parents.

# PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH:

*Maternal Deaths—The Ways to Prevention.* Iago Galdston, M.D. The Commonwealth Fund. New York. What the individual husband and wife should know and what they can do to reduce maternal risks.

*Maternity Handbook: for Pregnant Mothers and Expectant Fathers.* Anne A. Stevens. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York.

*Mother and Baby Care in Pictures.* Louise Zabriskie, R.N. J. B. Lippincott Company. Philadelphia.

*Modern Motherhood.* Claude E. Heaton, M.D. Farrar and Rinehart. New York. A doctor takes time to talk with prospective parents, answering their unasked questions and helping them to guard the mother's health.

# MARRIAGE EDUCATION:

*Marriage.* Ernest R. Groves. Henry Holt and Company. New York. A college text.

*Marriage and Family Life.* Gladys Hoagland Groves. Houghton, Mifflin Company. Boston. A college text. Also in trade edition for out-of-school youth.

*Preparation for Marriage.* Ernest R. Groves. Emerson Books, Inc. New York. A brief, popular statement for youth about to marry.

# THE FAMILY:

*The Happy Family.* John Levy, M.D. and Ruth Munroe. Alfred A. Knopf. New York. Simply and interestingly written by a psychiatrist and a psychologist, husband and wife.

# Index

- Abdomen, 90
- Accusation, false, 51
- Adjustment, sex, 110-11, 114, 117-18
- Adolescent
  - changes, 87
  - friendships, 61
  - and parent, 24
  - sex development, 56
  - sex strain, 56
- Adult masturbation, 59-63
- , self-centered, 61
- , vicious, 48, 49
- Aesthetics as sublimation, 58
- Affection
  - between child and parents, 211
  - of parent for child, 210
  - and sex, 80-81, 111, 117, 124, 198, 199
  - versus physical sex, 207-8
  - versus sex in man, 207
  - versus sex in woman, 206-8
- Alcohol and impotence, 168
- Ambivalency, 26
- American husband, 128, 131
- wife, 128
- Ampulla
  - of Fallopian tube, 102
  - of vas deferens, 90
- Analysis of self, 27, 37-63
- Anatomy, female, 91-95, 102-7
- male, 85-91, 98-101
- Androgen, 89
- Anemia in pregnancy, 179
- Animal passion, 16
- Anticlimax in marriage, 111
- Anus, 104-5
- Anxiety and impotency, 170
- and intercourse, 161
- Asceticism, 25-26, 50-51
- Aschheim-Zondek test, 179
- Athletics as sublimation, 58
- Attitudes, 25-26, 55
- conflicting, 26-27, 78, 80-82
- of men, 55
- Attitudes (*cont.*)
  - origin of, 14, 35-36, 49-50, 52
  - of women, 55
- Bible passages, 50
- Biology, value of, 48
- Birth canal, 95, 104
- infection of, 180-81
- Birth control
  - clinics, 190-91
  - and conscience, 185, 188
  - definition of, 183-84
  - economic motive for, 192-93
  - harmful or harmless, 186
  - and health, 192, 194
  - and low fertility, 187-88, 193
  - methods, discussion of, 190
  - moral evaluation of, 184-85
  - motives of, 191-93
  - and premarital intercourse, 188-89, 195
  - reliability of, 189-91
  - social evaluation of, 184-85, 188
  - woman's share in, 186
- Birth limitation, 183
- Bladder, 90, 92, 98, 99, 100, 101, 104-5
- Boyhood versus girlhood, 39
- Breasts in pregnancy, 178
- Bride, frigidity of, 172
- preparation for coitus, 145-51
- Bridegroom, errors of, 115-16
- panic of, 121-22
- Bulb of vestibule, 103
- Bully, psychic, 47
- Cancer
  - of cervix, 187
  - early diagnosis of, 212-13
  - and "false menstruation," 212-13
  - of prostate, 187
- Cavity of uterus, 104-5
- Celibacy, 208
- Cervix, 88, 93, 103-5

- Cervix (*cont.*)  
 eversion of, 102-3  
 examination of, 212-13  
 infected, 174  
 laceration of, 102-3  
 parous, 102-3  
 uteri, 102-5  
 virgin, 103  
 "Change of life," 87, 212-13  
 treatment of, 213  
 Childbearing, woman's best years  
   for, 194  
 Childbirth, 92  
   examination after, 180  
   safety rate of, 194  
 Childhood influences, 13-15, 18,  
   24, 27, 35-37  
 —masturbation, 59  
 Child spacing, 194  
 —, vicious, 47  
 Cilia of tubes, 95  
 Civilized man, sex in, 18-19  
 Cleanliness and coitus, 133  
 Climacteric, 87  
   after the, 214  
   female, 212-13  
   male, 213  
   treatment of, 212-13  
 Climax of coitus, 140-41  
 Clitoris, 91-92, 104-5  
   orgasm, 166  
 Coccyx, 100, 101, 104-5  
 Coital positions, 143  
   in pregnancy, 180  
 Coitus, adjustment in, 110-12  
   and fatigue, 134  
   frequency of, 158-62  
   in pregnancy, 180-81  
   length of, 140-41  
   man's fear of, 120-24  
   program of, 119-21  
   and quarreling, 132  
   sex differences in, 116-17  
   values of, 152  
   versus masturbation, 61, 63  
 Competition and sex, 162  
 Conception, delayed, 177  
 —, premature, 155  
 Confession, 28  
 Confinement and sex life, 181-82  
 Conscience and birth control, 185,  
   188  
   and impotency, 169  
 Consummation of marriage, 109,  
   117  
 Continence, 32, 185  
 Contraception and sex standards,  
   204  
   effectiveness of, 189-91  
 Contraceptives, 177, 184, 186  
   effects of, 187-88  
   ill-timed, 156  
 Cord, spermatic, 98  
 Corpus luteum, 102-03  
 Courtship, affection, 66  
   books on, 64  
   conventions, 66  
   differences, 66  
   effect in marriage, 74-75  
   frankness, 66  
   freedom, 66  
   idealization, 66  
   intimacy, 66  
   a period of discovery, 73-74  
   physical passion in, 67-71  
   resentment in, 74-75  
   restraint, 66  
   self-control in, 70  
   sex attraction, 72-73  
   sex stimulation in, 69-72, 76  
   trends, 28  
   without sex attraction, 67-68,  
     72-73, 76  
 Cowper's glands, 100-1  
 Curiosity of child, 24, 37-38, 42,  
   44, 54-55  
 Darkness, coitus in, 125-26  
 Daydreaming, morbid, 51  
 Daydreams of girls, 79  
   of boys, 80  
 Delivery, premature, 181  
 Desire, periodicity of, 162-64  
 Diagnosis, early, 187  
 Dickinson, Robert L., 97-107  
 Disappointment and frigidity, 171  
 Disguising of sex interest, 39  
 Disgust, 51  
   and impotency, 169  
 Divorce, 67

- Divorce (*cont.*)  
     and sex ignorance, 21  
 Doctor's attitudes, 29-30  
 Drugs and impotence, 168  
 Ducts, 89, 90, 100, 101  
     ejaculatory, 90, 100-1  
  
 Economic motive for birth con-  
     trol, 192-93  
 Education, need of, 48, 49  
 Efferent ducts, 89  
 Ejaculation, 90, 91  
     premature, 168  
 Ejaculatory duct, 90, 100, 101  
 Embryo, 102, 104  
 Emotional conflict, and im-  
     potency, 170, 171  
 —re coitus, 123  
 Endocrine  
     function of testes, 89  
     glands, 30  
     and birth control, 193-94  
     and infertility, 193-94  
 Engagement, 82, 84  
     breaking of, 71-72  
 Epididymis, 98, 99, 100  
 Erection, 87-88  
 Erogenous zones, peripheral, 154  
 Erotic thoughts, 88  
 Estrogens, 94  
 Evil and sex, 25  
 Examination, after childbirth, 180  
     physical, 29-30  
     during pregnancy, 179-80  
     premarriage, 114  
     preventive value of, 187  
 Excretory organs, female, 104-5  
     male, 98-99  
 Exercises for vagina and pelvic  
     floor, 180  
 Exploitation of sex, 197  
  
 Fallopian tubes, 90, 94-95, 102-5,  
     174  
 Family differences, 46-47  
 Fatigue and coitus, 134  
 Fear, 15, 27  
     of hurting wife, 169  
     and impotency, 169  
     of man, re coitus, 120-124  
  
 Fear (*cont.*)  
     and sex, 23-24, 25, 28, 61  
     re sex, 201, 202  
 Fellowship and coitus, 132  
 Female germ cell, 94  
 Female sex anatomy, 91-95, 102-7  
 Female tubes, 90, 94-95, 102-5  
 "Female weaknesses," 93  
 Fertility, 212  
     adolescent, 94  
     decade of greatest, 187  
     low, 193  
     -reducing factors, 174  
 Fertilization, 95  
 Fetal heartbeat, 179  
 —life, 95  
 Fetus and coitus, 180  
 First intercourse, 169  
 Fixation on parent, 45, 46  
 Follicle, 102-3  
 Foreskin of clitoris, 104-5  
     of penis, 100, 101  
 Fornix, lateral, 104-5  
     posterior, 104-5  
 Fourchette, 106-7  
 Frankness, 124-25  
     lack of, 16  
     versus confession, 28  
 Freedom in family, 55  
 Frequency of intercourse, 131,  
     137, 158, 166, 178  
 Friedman test, 179  
 Frigidity, 170-72  
     of bride, 172  
     causes of, 171  
 Fundus of uterus, 94, 102-5  
  
 Galdston, Iago M., 216  
 Generative organs, female, 102-7  
     male, 98-101  
 Genito-urinary system, male, 98-  
     101  
 Girl, curiosity of, 54-55  
     modesty of, 52-54  
     social pressure on, 39  
 Glands, endocrine, 30  
     lubricating, 106  
     prostate, 90, 100, 101  
     vulvovaginal, 102-3  
 Glans penis, 99, 100, 101

- Gonads, 30, 87  
 Gonorrhea, 175-77  
 Groves, E. R., 215, 216  
 Groves, Gladys H., 215, 216  
 Gynecologist, 114-15, 155, 166, 167, 178, 187  
  
 Hamblen, E. C., 215  
 Hamilton, G. V., 164, 191  
 Happiness and sex, 33-34  
 Hatred and frigidity, 171  
 Health and birth control, 192, 194  
     and sex, 29, 31, 162  
 Heart conditions and pregnancy, 177, 179, 212  
 Heaton, Claude E., 216  
 Heterosexuality and masturbation, 60  
 History, sex, 14-15, 27, 28-29, 37-63  
 Home, definition of, 209  
     influence of, 43-46  
 Honeymoon, 126-27  
     after the, 153-54  
 Hormones, female, 94  
     male, 89  
 Human versus animal sex, 206  
 Husband, sterile, 174-75  
 Husband's fear of hurting wife, 169  
     rôle after childbirth, 182  
     rôle in pregnancy, 180, 181  
     versus wife's attitudes re coitus, 135-137  
 Hymen, 92-93, 102-5  
     and impotency, 169  
     rôle of, 113-14  
  
 Idealism, 51-52  
 Idealization in courtship, 77  
 Ignorance of sex, 21-24, 40-41  
 Illness and frigidity, 171  
     and sex vigor, 168  
 Impotency, 123-24, 168  
     temporary, 169-70  
 Individual's need of parenthood, 210  
 Individual variations in sex need, 165  
 Infatuation, 67  
  
 Infection and coitus, 134  
 Inferiority feeling and sex, 47  
     and sex lack, 32  
 Infertility, 173  
     causes of, 193  
     and contraceptives, 187-88, 193  
     and hypothyroidism, 175  
     remedies for, 173-74  
 Influences, childhood, 13-15, 24, 27, 35-37  
     of home, 43-46  
     of school, 46-50  
 Inguinal canal, 90  
 Inheritance, 90, 94  
 Innocence, 24  
 Insanity and masturbation, 59  
 Instinct in sex life, 16-18, 23  
 Intercourse  
     child's reaction to, 44, 46  
     discomfort in, 115  
     first, 108-12, 117-18, 124  
     frequency of, 131, 137, 158-66, 178  
     imperfect, 109  
     length of, 140-41  
     painful, 115  
     and parenthood, 209-10  
     in pregnancy, 180-81  
     sexual, 87, 94  
     values of, 152, 167  
 Internal secretion, glands of, 30  
 Interstitial tissue, 89  
 Irritation and coitus, 161  
 Isthmus, 102  
  
 Jealousy, of child, 44-45, 46  
     and sex satisfaction, 154-55  
  
 Kidney, 98, 99  
     conditions and pregnancy, 177, 179, 212  
  
 Labia majora, 91, 102-5  
     —minora, 91, 102-5  
 Legislation and sex, 203, 204  
 Levator muscle, 103, 104-5  
 Levy, John, 216  
 Loneliness and sex interest, 41-42  
 Love, 67-68, 73-74, 76-78  
     individual differences in, 77



Love (*cont.*)  
 and physical sex, 203  
 proof of, 182  
 Lubricating glands, 106  
 Maladjustment in sex, 137-38  
 Male, climacteric, 213  
   genito-urinary system, 98-101  
   germ cells, 90  
   organs, 85-91, 98-101  
   sex anatomy, 85-91, 98-101  
   tubes, 174  
 Man's fear of coitus, 120-24  
 —rôle in affection and sex, 207  
 Marriage, and affection, 199  
   arranged by parents, 67  
   consummation of, 109, 117  
   counselor, 155, 166  
   crisis, 189  
   early versus late, 56-57  
   sex and affection in, 208-9  
   sudden, 67  
   values of, 200-1  
 Masturbation, 58-63  
 Maturity, and sex activity, 31  
   sexual and social, 56-57  
 Meatus of urethra, female, 104-5,  
   106-7  
   male, 98, 99, 101  
 Medicine, preventive, 30  
 Men versus women in love, 77  
 Men's attitudes, 55  
 —versus women's false ideas, 41  
 Menopause, 212-13  
   and cancer, 212-13  
 Menses and coitus, 155  
 Menstruation  
   intercourse during, 167  
   and pregnancy, 178  
   and sex desire, 163-64  
 Mental disease and birth control,  
   192  
 Miscarriage and intercourse, 180  
 Modesty, 52-53, 55-56  
   false, 109, 125  
 Mons Veneris, 104-5  
 Moods, adjustment of, 138  
 Moral results of birth control, 188  
 "Morning sickness" in pregnancy,  
   178-79

Mother, age of at birth of child,  
   194  
   pelvic health of, 180  
 Munroe, Ruth, 216  
 Nausea in pregnancy, 178-79  
 Neck of womb, 104  
 Neurotic feeling and thinking,  
   25, 42, 50-51  
 Nipple in pregnancy, 178  
 Nocturnal emission, 91  
 Organs, excretory, female, 104-5  
   male, 98-99  
   sex, 85-107  
 Orgasm, clitoris versus vaginal,  
   166  
   lack and frigidity, 171  
   of wife, 141-44  
 Ova, 212  
 Ovarian failure, 174, 175  
 Ovaries, 30, 87, 94, 102-5, 212  
 Overindulgence in coitus, 164-65  
   in sex, 167  
 Ovulation, 94, 95  
   time of, 177  
 Ovum, 90, 94-95, 101, 104  
   fertilization of, 177-78  
 Os, internal and external, 102-3  
 Parent fixation, 45, 46  
 Parenthood, 181  
   attitudes toward, 210  
   a fulfillment, 210  
   unexpected, 177  
   values of, 212  
 Parents, sex attitudes of, 24  
   unhappy, 210  
 Passion, differences in, 139  
   and frigidity, 171  
   in pregnancy, 180  
 Pathological bleeding, 212-13  
 Pavillion, 102  
 Pelvic examination, 114  
 —exercises, 180  
 —health of mother, 180  
 Pelvis, 99  
   of kidney, 98  
   measurements and pregnancy,  
   179

- Penis, 87, 88, 91, 92, 100, 101, 104  
 Penitence, 27  
 Perineum, 104-5  
 Periodicity of desire, 162-64  
 Peripheral erogenous zones, 154  
 "Personal hygiene of women," 155  
 Personality and sex, 198  
 Petting, 57-58  
 Phallus, diameter of, 107  
 Physical passion and marriage, 67  
 —sex and love, 203  
 —versus psychic values of sex, 206  
 Physiological values of sex, 29-30, 31-32  
 Pleasure philosophy, 192  
 —versus happiness, 34  
 Pollutions, 91  
 Pornographic display, 47-48  
 Positions for coitus, 143  
 in pregnancy, 180  
 Pregnancy, 95, 177-81  
 anemia in, 179  
 child's reaction to, 44  
 control of, 183  
 diet in, 179  
 early, 57  
 examinations in, 179-80  
 fetal heartbeat in, 179  
 and health, 177  
 and heart conditions, 212  
 husband's rôle in, 179, 180, 181  
 hygiene of, 179  
 intercourse in, 180-81  
 and kidney conditions, 212  
 late, 212  
 signs of, 178-79  
 syphilis in, 179  
 tests for, 179  
 Premarital intercourse and birth control, 188-89, 195  
 —sex activity, 58  
 Premarriage examination, 114-15  
 for venereal disease, 176  
 —history, 14-15, 27, 28-29, 35, 39-43  
 —intimacy, 73-74, 83-84  
 Premature delivery, 181  
 —ejaculation, 168  
 Prepuce of clitoris, 104-5  
 Prepuce (*cont.*)  
 of penis, 100  
 Primitiveness, sex, 139  
 Profession and birth control, 193  
 Professional strain and sex, 162  
 Promiscuity, 199  
 Promontory of sacrum, 104-5  
 Prostate gland, 90, 98  
 cancer of, 187  
 infection, 174  
 Prostitute, effect of, 123, 128-29  
 Prostitution, 197-98, 207  
 Prudery, 48, 56  
 Psychiatrist, 166, 168  
 Psychic aspects of sex, 16  
 —causes of impotency, 169-70  
 Pubic hair, 91  
 Public opinion and sex, 203  
 Puritanism, 51  
 Rape, 28-29  
 Rectum, 90, 100, 101, 104-5  
 Reëducation of attitudes, 36  
 Religion, 50  
 as sublimation, 58  
 Reproduction, 87  
 and sex, 209-10  
 Reproductive period, end of, 212, 213  
 —organs, female, 102-7  
 male, 98-101  
*Research in Marriage*, 191  
 Rest and coitus, 118  
 Restlessness and continence, 32  
 Retreat from sex, 57  
 Retrodisplacement of womb, 93  
 Rhythm of sex, 162-64  
 Rôle of wife in coitus, 130-31  
 Rome, vice of, 25  
 Ross, Robert A., 215  
 Sac, 102-3  
 Sacrum, 100, 101, 104-5  
 Savage, sex life of, 18  
 School, influence of, 46-50  
 Science and pleasure, 192  
 Scrotum, 89, 90, 98, 99, 100  
 Self-analysis, 27, 37-63  
 —blame, 55  
 —centered adult, 61

Self (*cont.*)

- control and sex, 202
- expression in sex, 130
- manipulation, 59-63
- Selfishness in sex, 23, 25, 204
  - of bridegroom, 109
- Semen, 88, 90-91, 100, 103, 104, 213
  - and coital frequency, 178
- Seminal failure, 174-75
  - causes of, 175
- vesicles, 98, 99, 100
  - infection of, 174
- Seminiferous tubules, 89
- Separation, parent-child, 39, 41-42
- Sex
  - activity, insufficient, 164-65
  - adjustment, 110-11, 139, 154
  - affected by home, 209
  - and affection, 33, 80-81, 205, 208-9
  - anatomy, female, 91-95, 102-7
    - male, 85-91, 98-101
  - code, changes in, 189, 199, 202
  - coercion, 39
  - communion in marriage, 206
  - conduct of women, socially coerced, 206, 207
  - conflict, 31
  - and coöperation, 33
  - in courtship, 78-79
  - curiosity, 37-38, 42, 44, 54-55
  - development in youth, 56
  - differences in coitus, 116-17
  - diminishing, 212
  - education, need of, 48, 49, 50
  - ethical control of, 203-4
  - and evil, 25
  - fear, 201, 202
  - fulfillment, 199
  - general contribution of, 30-31
  - and happiness, 33-34
  - harmony, values of, 209
  - and health, 29-30, 31-32
  - in the home, 209
  - ignorance, 40-41
  - illusiveness of, 205
  - impulses, 26
  - individualism, 202
  - interest and punishment, 41-42

Sex (*cont.*)

- life and confinement, 181-82
- life and contraception, 194
- maladjustment, 137-38, 171-72
- memories, 39
- and modesty, 52-54
- motives and marriage, 196, 198
- organs, male, 85-91, 98-101
  - female, 91-95, 102-7
- and personality, 198
- physical versus psychic, 206
- play, 57-63
- precocity, 47
- refinement, 139
- regulation of, 201, 202
- and reproduction, 205-206, 209-10
  - rhythm, 162-64
  - satisfaction, 196
    - and jealousy, 154-55
  - seasonal character of, 211
  - selfishness, 197
  - social meaning of, 201
  - standards versus license, 204
  - stimulation, 154
  - strain in engagement, 82-83
    - youth, 56
  - taboo, 124-25
  - technique, 19, 26
  - trends, 203
  - versus affection, 206-8
- Sexual intercourse, 87
  - versus spiritual, 51
- Shame, 15, 24, 39, 43
- Shock, 24, 47, 56
- Sight-seeing on honeymoon, 126
- Sin and sex, 27-28
- Smegma, 92
- Social coercion of women, 206-7
  - value of parenthood, 210
- Sperm, faulty reception of, 175
  - premature discharge of, 168
- Spermatic cord, 98, 99
- Spermatogenesis, 89
- Spermatozoa, 88, 89, 94, 95, 98, 99, 100, 213
  - faulty delivery of, 175
  - motility of, 90
- Statistics re birth control, 189-90, 191

- Sterility, 172-75  
     diagnosis of, 173  
     factors, 174  
     prevalence of, 172-73  
 Sterne, Lawrence, 132  
 Stevens, Anne A., 216  
 Structural defects, rarity of, 170  
 Sublimation, 57-58, 61  
     primitive, 47  
 Sub-pubic arch, 106-7  
 Sunbathing, 54  
 Symphysis, 100, 104-5  
 Syphilis, 175-77  
     in pregnancy, 179  
  
 Testes, 30, 89  
 Testicles, 87, 89, 90, 98, 99, 100  
 Testosterone, 89  
 Thyroid and fertility, 175  
 Travel and coitus, 160  
     on honeymoon, 127  
*Tristram Shandy*, 131-32  
 Tubes, blocking of male, 174  
     Fallopian, 90, 94-95, 102-5, 174  
     female, 90, 94-95, 102-5  
 Tuberculosis, and birth control,  
     192  
     and pregnancy, 177, 179  
 Tubules, seminiferous, 89, 90  
  
 Undernutrition and ovarian fail-  
     ure, 175  
     and seminal failure, 175  
 Unmarried, the, 31, 199-200  
     sex conflict of, 31  
 Unsatisfied woman, 166-67  
 Unselfishness, 51-52  
     of bridegroom, 109  
     of husband, 182  
 Ureter, 98, 99, 100, 101  
 Urethra, female, 91, 104-5  
     male, 88, 90, 98-100  
 Urinary organs, female, 102-5  
     male, 85-91, 98-101  
 Urine, 98, 104  
 Urologist, 166  
 Uterus, 90, 92, 93, 102-4  
  
 Vagina, 88, 92, 93, 102-5  
     nulliparous, 106-7  
     Vagina (*cont.*)  
         postcoital, 107  
         precoital, 107  
         virginal, 107  
 Vaginal examinations, after child-  
     birth, 180  
     value of, 187  
     exercises, 180  
     opening, diameters of, 107  
 Vas deferens, 90, 99, 100, 101  
 Venereal diseases, 29-30, 114, 175-  
     77  
 Vestibule, 103, 106-7  
 Virginal uterus, 102-3  
     vagina, 106-7  
 Virginity, 92  
 Vulva, 91, 102-3, 104  
 Vulvar distensibilities, 106-7  
 Vulvovaginal glands, 102-3  
  
 Warren, Carl, 215  
 "Wet dreams," 91  
 Wife, sterile, 174  
     unsatisfied, 166-67  
 Wife's orgasm, 141-44  
     success in coitus, 152-53  
     vanity, 154  
 Wile, Ira A., 215  
 Woman's rôle in affection versus  
     sex, 206-8  
     sex awakening, 82  
     tubes, 90, 94-5, 102-5  
 Womb, 93  
     body of, 102-5  
     cavity of, 104-5  
     mouth of, 102-3  
     top of, 104  
     virginal, 102-3  
 Women,  
     in love, 77  
     personal hygiene of, 155  
     versus men in coitus, 140-41  
 Women's attitudes, 55  
     self-expression in sex, 130  
  
 Yellow body, 102-3  
 Youth, masturbation in, 59  
     sex development in, 56  
  
 Zabriskie, Louise, 216  
 Zones, peripheral erogenous, 154